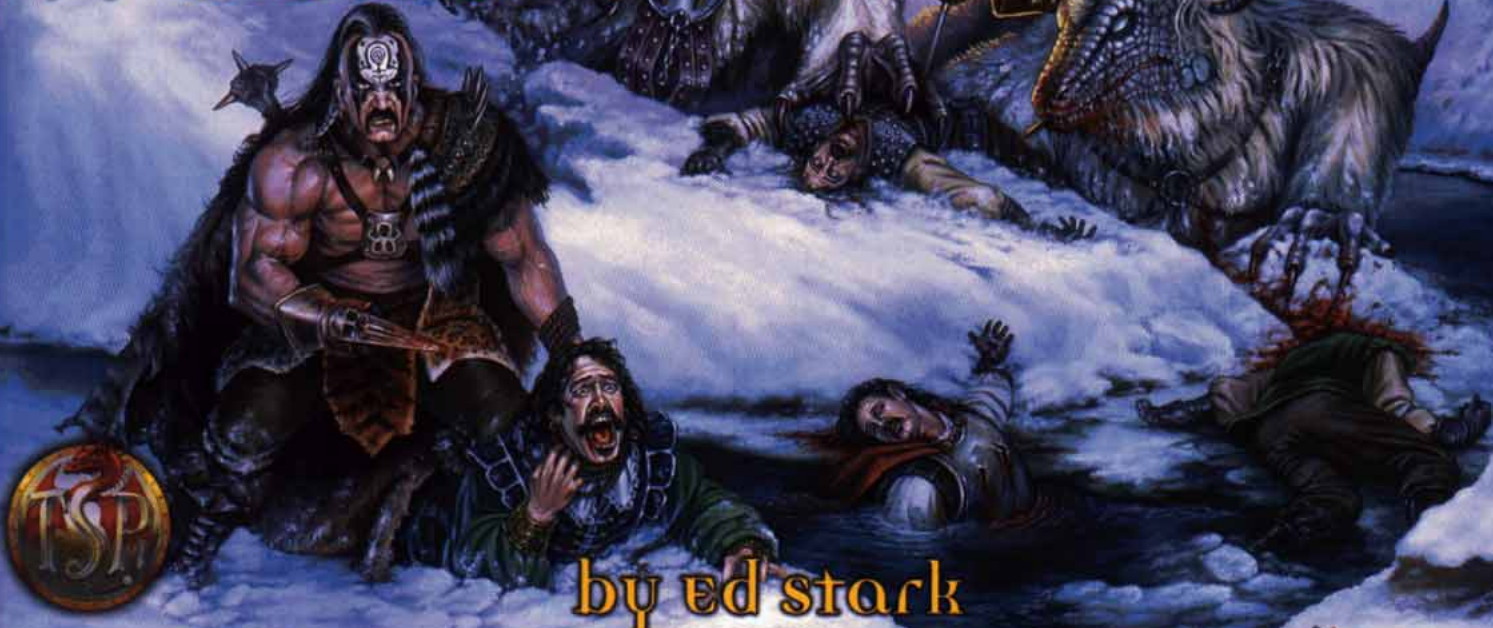


# BRIGHT

CAMPAIGN EXPANSION

Suitable for all levels of play

## Tribes of the Heartless Waste



by ed stark







**Molochev Sarveklos** #TW1

Move: 2      Melee: 4  
 Defense: 4      Charge: 6  
 Morale: X ▼

2 Hits  
 Melee: 2  
 Charge: 3

1 Hit  
 Melee: 3  
 Charge: 4

**Uvna Sarveklos** #TW2

Move: 2      Melee: 5  
 Defense: 5      Charge: 6  
 Morale: X ▼

2 Hits  
 Melee: 2  
 Charge: 3

1 Hit  
 Melee: 3  
 Charge: 4

**Garask Infantry** #TW3

Move: 1      Melee: 5  
 Defense: 4  
 Morale: X ▼

2 Hits  
 Melee: 3

1 Hit  
 Melee: 4

**Sword Rust Pikes** #TW4

Move: 1      Melee: 4  
 Defense: 3  
 Morale: X ▼

+1 to attacks and defense vs. mounted units

2 Hits  
 Melee: 1

1 Hit  
 Melee: 3

**Sword Rust Infantry** #TW5

Move: 1      Melee: 3  
 Defense: 3  
 Morale: X ▼

+1 to all attacks at night.

2 Hits  
 Melee: 1

1 Hit  
 Melee: 2

**Sword Rust Infantry** #TW6

Move: 1      Melee: 3  
 Defense: 3  
 Morale: X ▼

+1 to all attacks at night.

2 Hits  
 Melee: 1

1 Hit  
 Melee: 2

**Rovarsski Varsk Riders** #TW7

Move: 2      Melee: 4  
 Defense: 4      Charge: 6  
 Morale: X ▼

May move freely through hills, glacier, and icefield; no penalties on frozen lake; ignore blizzard.

2 Hits  
 Melee: 2  
 Charge: 3

1 Hit  
 Melee: 3  
 Charge: 5

**Slekazniy Guards** #TW8

Move: 2      Melee: 5  
 Defense: 4      Charge: 5  
 Morale: X ▼

May move freely through hills, glacier, and icefield; no penalties on frozen lake; ignore blizzard.

2 Hits  
 Melee: 3  
 Charge: 2

1 Hit  
 Melee: 4  
 Charge: 4



Vos Elite Infantry

#TW17

Move: 1

Defense: 4

Morale: ✕

Melee: 4

+1 to attacks vs. irregulars, levies, and pikes.

2 Hits

Melee: 2

1 Hit

Melee: 3

Vos Irregulars

#TW18

Move: 2

Defense: 2

Morale: ▼

Melee: 3

Missile: 1

1 Hit

Melee: 2

Missile: 0

Vos Knights

#TW19

Move: 2

Defense: 4

Morale: ✕

Melee: 4

Charge: 6

2 Hits

Melee: 2

Charge: 3

1 Hit

Melee: 3

Charge: 4

Vos Levies

#TW20

Move: 1

Defense: 2

Morale: ▼

Melee: 2

2 Hits

Melee: 0

1 Hit

Melee: 1

Vos Pikemen

#TW21

Move: 1

Defense: 3

Morale: ✕

Melee: 3

Cannot be charged; +1 to attacks and defense vs. mounted units.

2 Hits

Melee: 0

1 Hit

Melee: 2

Vos Scouts

#TW22

Move: 3

Defense: 2

Morale: ✕

Melee: 2

Missile: 3

Scouts may move freely through any terrain.

2 Hits

Melee: 0

Vos Varsk Riders

#TW23

Move: 2

Defense: 4

Morale: ✕

Melee: 5

Charge: 5

May move freely through hills, glacier, and icefield; no penalties on frozen lake; ignore blizzard.

2 Hits

Melee: 3

Charge: 3

1 Hit

Melee: 4

Charge: 4

Axes of Belinik

#TW24

Move: 2

Defense: 3

Morale: ✕

Melee: 4

If accompanied by a priest of Belinik (adventurer card), unit ignores F and R results not caused by magic.

2 Hits

Melee: 1

1 Hit

Melee: 3



**Topek Kzensky** #TW9

Move: 3  
Defense: 2  
Morale: ✕

Melee: 2  
Missile: 3  
*Scouts may move freely through any terrain.*

**Aral's Armor** #TW10

Move: 1  
Defense: 4  
Morale: ✕

Melee: 5  
*+1 to attacks vs. irregulars, spears, or pikes.*

2 Hits  
Melee: 2

1 Hit  
Melee: 3

**The Captain's Guard** #TW11

Move: 1  
Defense: 4  
Morale: ✕

Melee: 5  
*+1 to attacks vs. irregulars, spears, or pikes.*

2 Hits  
Melee: 2

1 Hit  
Melee: 3

**Vos Archers** #TW12

Move: 2  
Defense: 2  
Morale: ✕

Melee: 2  
Missile: 4  
*+1 to missile attacks vs. mounted units.*

1 Hit  
Melee: 0  
Missile: 3

**Vos Artillerists** #TW13

Move: 1  
Defense: 1  
Morale: ✕

Melee: 2  
Missile: 4  
*Ignore defensive terrain penalties when attacking.*

1 Hit  
Melee: 1  
Missile: 3

**Vos Berserkers** #TW14

Move: 2  
Defense: 2  
Morale: ✕

Melee: 5  
Charge: 2  
*Ignore F results not caused by magic.*

1 Hit  
Melee: 4  
Charge: 1

3 Hits  
Melee: 1

**Vos Cavalry** #TW15

Move: 3  
Defense: 3  
Morale: ✕

Melee: 3  
Missile: 1  
Charge: 5

1 Hit  
Melee: 2  
Missile: 0  
Charge: 4

2 Hits  
Melee: 0  
Charge: 2

**Vos Infantry** #TW16

Move: 1  
Defense: 3  
Morale: ✕

Melee: 3  
*+1 to attacks vs. irregulars, levies, and pikes.*

1 Hit  
Melee: 2

2 Hits  
Melee: 1



**Troll Legion** #TW25

Move: 1  
Defense: 3  
Morale: ✕

Melee: 6  
*Regenerates 1 hit not caused by magic or fire every other turn unless destroyed.*

2 Hits  
Melee: 3

1 Hit  
Melee: 5

**Gnoll Marauders** #TW26

Move: 2  
Defense: 3  
Morale: ✕

Melee: 3  
Missile: 2  
*Add one random morale symbol if fighting in the Gnoll Fells.*

1 Hit  
Melee: 2  
Missile: 1

**Kal Kalathor Wolfriders** #TW27

Move: 2  
Defense: 3  
Morale: ✕

Melee: 3  
Charge: 4  
Missile: 1

2 Hits  
Melee: 1  
Charge: 2

1 Hit  
Melee: 2  
Charge: 3  
Missile: 0

**Kal Kalathor Archers** #TW28

Move: 1  
Defense: 2  
Morale: ▼

Melee: 1  
Missile: 4

1 Hit  
Melee: 0  
Missile: 3

**Kal Kalathor Infantry** #TW29

Move: 2  
Defense: 3  
Morale: ▼

Melee: 4  
Missile: 1

2 Hits  
Melee: 2

1 Hit  
Melee: 3  
Missile: 0

**WEATHER CARD**  
**Blizzard**

**Placement:** May be placed/removed only by the DM; does not occupy an area.

**Movement:** All units on the battlefield reduce movement by one (minimum of one) while the Blizzard remains in effect.

**Combat:** All units on the battlefield suffer a -1 penalty to their attack/defense ratings and a -2 penalty to their charge/missile ratings while the Blizzard remains in effect.

#TW30

**TERRAIN CARD**  
**Frozen Lake**

**Movement:** All units must stop movement upon entering the area containing this card. No units may charge into or out of this area.

**Combat:** All units on the frozen lake reduce their defense by 1 when being fired upon by enemy missiles.

#TW31

**TERRAIN CARD**  
**Armed Camp**

**Placement:** Must be placed in friendly lines.

**Movement:** Friendly units are not affected. No unit can charge into the area.

**Combat:** All friendly units within the camp add +1 to their normal defense rating (enemy artillery ignore these bonuses). Friendly units in the area ignore rout and fall back results, although they suffer 1 hit on an R result. If no friendly units are present to hold the armed camp, the effects of this card may be ignored by all enemy troops.

#TW32



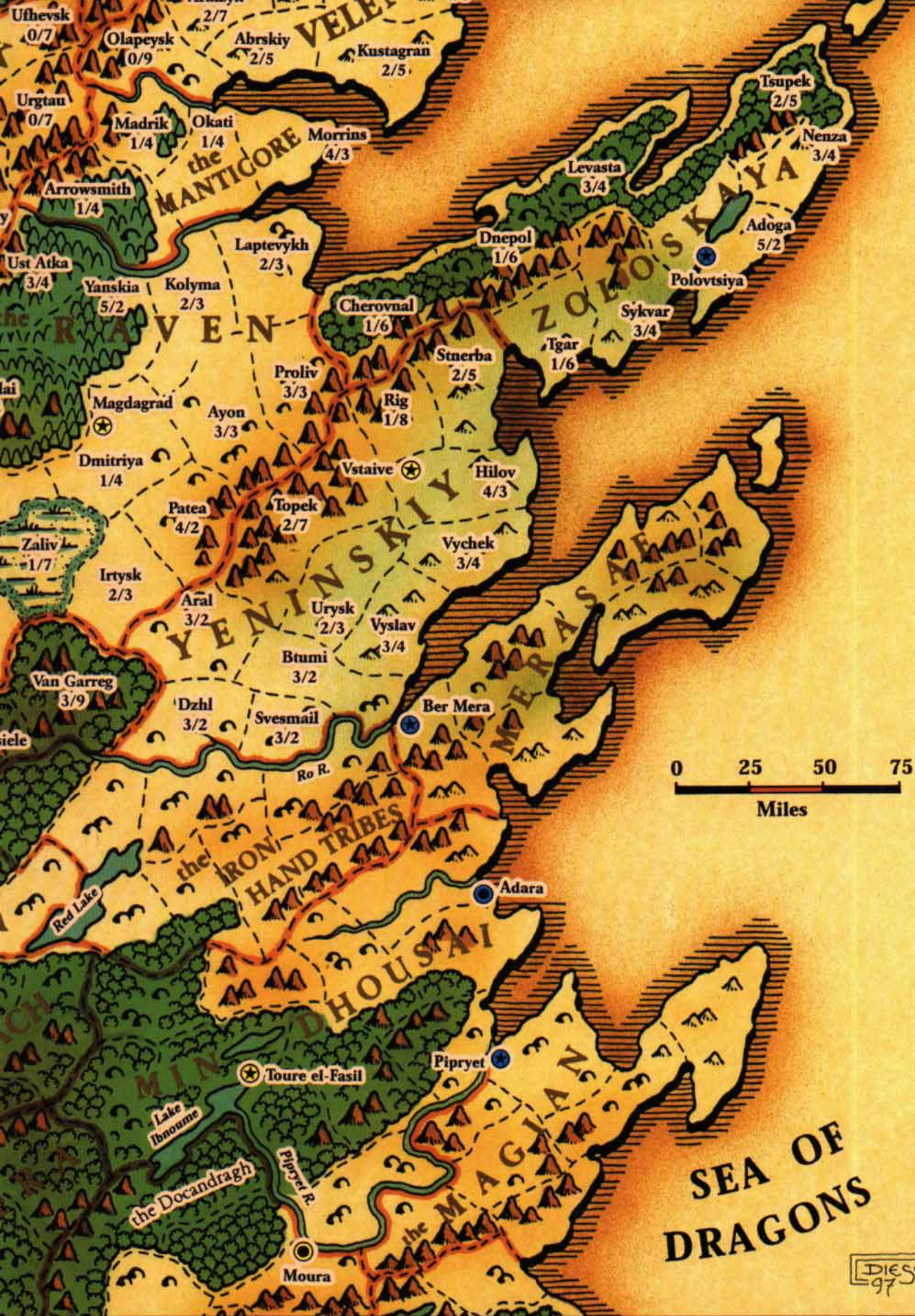


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3147XXX0701 TRIBES OF THE HEARTLESS WASTES









# VOSGAARD











# tribes of the heartless wastes players' chronicle

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Howl at the wind, O warrior;  
Defy its frozen touch.  
Shake off the ice, my tsarevo;  
It clutches at your soul.  
The steel-sharp blade can't kill you;  
Ignore its brightn'd gleam.  
Belinik's will must strengthen you;  
Kriesha calls your name.

**B**rutal and cold, the lands of Vosgaard match the temperament of their people. Once followers of Azrai, the Vos retreated to the most remote parts of Cerilia after the Lord of Shadow's defeat, and have held claim to those lands for over a thousand years.

But within the last few centuries, the Vos have begun to stir from their frozen lands. Perhaps they sense the time is ripe for another continental war, or maybe these warriors have grown tired of their icy realm. Whatever the case, the Vos have been reminding the Brechts, the Khinasi, the Rjurik, and even the faraway Anuireans of

# introduction

the reason that their children's bedtime stories sometimes feature the angry war cries of the Vos.

## how to use this accessory

**P**layers may read this booklet—the *Players' Chronicle*—and use it in the same fashion as *Ruins of Empire* (in the BIRTHRIGHT® boxed set) or any of the other campaign expansions (*Havens of the Great Bay*, *The Rjurik Highlands*, and *Cities of the Sun*). This booklet contains information that most heroes or regents of Vosgaard would know (or be able to find out) before beginning a campaign. The DM may wish to keep some elements in this booklet secret from the players, but that information will be identified later.

Players should not read any part of *The DM's Guidebook* without the DM's permission. The information presented in that volume is intended solely for the DM—reading those pages may spoil a DM's plans for an adventure or campaign.

Unlike previous expansions for the BIRTHRIGHT campaign setting, the information in *Tribes of the Heartless Wastes* has been divided

into two booklets. More than any other area of Cerilia, Vosgaard is a place of mystery, danger, and brutality. Since most of the realms described in the DM's *Guidebook* are not suitable for player characters, the DM should control all information concerning them.

The four realms presented in the *Players' Chronicle*, however, are suitable for PCs who wish to be regents in Vosgaard. The DM will need to approve players' choices before a Vos campaign begins, depending on his plans for the size and scope of the campaign.

Following the realm information, this book presents an overview of the lands of Vosgaard to provide basic information that any native would know and to give regents information about their neighbors. These pages barely scratch the surface of the heartless wastes, though, and much of it may be based on hearsay, legend, or prejudice.

Go wary in the frozen wastes, or go not at all.

## domain descriptions

This book includes four player realms detailed according to the format created for *Ruins of Empire* and the other campaign expansions. An explanation of terms follows.

**Note:** In previous campaign expansions, realms were designated "recommended" or "not recommended" for PC use. All domains in the *Players' Chronicle* are recommended for PC use. However, the DM always makes the final decision whether to allow a character to play the regent of any of these domains.

**Alignment:** The general alignment of the realm. While individuals within the realm and even the regent may have drastically different alignments, the society or culture of the realm fits this description.

**Provinces/Holdings:** An at-a-glance description of the realm with a few political details or a capsule history. The table identifies each regent with holdings in the realm, as well as the relative strengths of known holdings. Principal regents are identified in the notes following the table.

- ◆ **Law:** What regents create and/or enforce the laws of the realm?
- ◆ **Temple:** What faiths are worshiped, and what proportion of people subscribe to those religions?
- ◆ **Guild:** What type of trade exists here, and who controls it?
- ◆ **Source:** Who are the wizards with taps into the magical sources of the realm?
- ◆ **Provinces:** Which regents rule the provinces? Who—if anyone—is ruler of the realm?

**Regency Generated/Accumulated:** How many Regency Points does the current ruler gain



each domain turn? How many has he saved? These numbers help players and DMs gauge the strength of a realm. Of course, a player character who assumes control of a realm starts with 0 RP and must calculate his own RP income.

**Treasury:** Most realms have a stockpile of gold bars (GB). Sometimes, a regent has a separate treasury for his "personal" use as well. Personal wealth may or may not be noted here.

**Army/Navy:** In Vosgaard, a realm without an army quickly becomes someone else's realm. Any known armed units and ships controlled by regents of the realm are detailed here. Of course, it's always possible for a regent to hire mercenaries and hide them from his rivals.

**Regent:** The ruler(s) of the realm are identified and receive a brief history or character sketch. Many realms have a number of regents controlling individual provinces; all of them are described here.

♦ **Lieutenants:** If the regent(s) have lieutenants, they will be noted here. Sometimes, detailed statistics and notes are provided.

**Important NPCs:** Most realms have noteworthy characters who are permanent residents or regular visitors; they may be described here. Sometimes, regents of landless domains or advisers are noted in this section.

**Description:** A brief history and overview of the area; interesting and important points about history, culture, and geography are found here.

♦ **Capital/Cities/Sites:** This section details the places where notable people or creatures of the realm are found. While hardly an exhaustive list, these places lay the groundwork for the creative DM who is interested in populating the realm with exciting adventure and interaction sites.

**Allies:** Current and historical allies are mentioned. Some alliances are dependent on a particular regent or character, and may change if a PC replaces that character.

**Enemies:** Even in the absence of war, a realm has enemies. Enemies are identified here, along with the reasons for their hostility.

**Players' Secrets:** This information provides ideas for adventures in and around the realm. Three types of players' secrets appear:

**Facts:** Some realms operate under unspoken rules or harbor semi-secret facts that only a character adventuring or ruling in the realm would know. These facts may be interpreted by the DM, but are true as stated.

**Rumors:** Not all rumors presented here are true. Most have some basis in fact, but some are outright lies. Still, they are active in the realm or around the court, and may provide leads or information.

**For the Regent's Eyes Only:** Players should not read this section unless the DM has granted them a domain in the realm. This is privileged information intended only for regents.

## identifying regents

A line of statistics is used to identify regents and other important characters. For example, under the Guild entry for Rovninodensk, the varsk breeder Sergei Ukhtra's name is followed by a line of abbreviations:

(MV; F4/T7; Br, tainted, 6)

This means the varsk breeder is a male of Vos descent (MV), a dual-class 4th-level fighter/7th-level thief (F4/T7), and bears a tainted bloodline of Brenna with a strength of 6 (Br, tainted, 6).

In other game products, a character's alignment is typically given as part of this statistic line. But because a PC never knows the alignment of those he encounters, alignments do not appear in this booklet since it is designed for player use. The DM will determine NPC alignments based on his interpretation of existing information, as well as details in the *DM's Guidebook*.

Abbreviations used in these statistics follow.

Bloodline	Class	Race
An: Anduiras	B: Bard	A: Anuirean
Az: Azrai	D: Druid	Aw: Awnshegh
Ba: Basaia	F: Fighter	Br: Brecht
Br: Brenna	Gu: Guildler*	D: Dwarf
Ma: Masela	M: Magician	E: Elf
Re: Reynir	P: Paladin	1/2E: Half-elf
Va: Vorynn	Pr: Priest	Ek: Ehrshegh
	R: Ranger	G: Goblin
	T: Thief	Gn: Groll
	W: Wizard	Hlf: Halfing
		Kh: Khinasi
		M: Monster
		Or: Orog
		Rj: Rjurik
		V: Vos

\* A character subclass described in the *Havens of the Great Bay* campaign expansion.

The designation for priests (Pr) is always followed by the name of the character's deity.

## delving into the frozen lands

The domain descriptions in this booklet and in the *DM's Guidebook* identify the current situations of the individual realms. A few even discuss the projected future. Players and Dungeon Masters must consider these conditions when starting adventures and campaigns. The volatility of this region of Cerilia cannot be underestimated. Borders mean little to the tribes of the heartless wastes, and politics change as frequently as the weather. Players must keep their eyes open in Vosgaard, or they will lose things they never knew they had.



While historians may disagree, it may be best that little is known of the history of Vosgaard and its dangerous inhabitants. Since arriving in Cerilia centuries ago, the Vos have struggled against the elements, their neighbors, and their own predilection for violence and cruelty in order to survive. It is a testament to their endurance that realms exist among the frozen wastes of the northlands. It is also fortunate that this tenacity has never turned outward for more than a few seasons at a time.

## ancient history

Once a peaceful and mystical race, the majority of the Vos in Aduria were swayed to the corrupt insight and power that Azrai, Lord of Shadow, offered them. Disenchanted with the introspective Vorynn, god of magic, many Vos chose Azrai's quick path to power and learned of magic and war from him.

But Azrai's gifts corrupt their user. Those few Vos who could truly master Azrai's legacy of magic found themselves overwhelmed and enslaved. Many of the Lost—the ancient wizards and servants of Azrai—sprang from Adurian Vos. Mighty in magic and terrible to behold, they became Azrai's slaves, unable to do anything but his bidding.

As for their knowledge and capacity for war, the Vos quickly learned how to kill and die in Azrai's service. At one time, legends tell, a single Vos warrior could destroy three of Anduiras' champions. This was likely true, but two Vos warriors, if left alone, would destroy each other, leaving six champions unopposed elsewhere. Azrai's "gift of war" turned on the Vos, even as they marched north under his banner, fighting and killing as they went.

The history of the War of Shadow has been related many times elsewhere, but the outcome remains the same. The Vos, trusting in Azrai's might and lusting after more of his promised "gifts," attacked their human brethren first in Aduria, then in Cerilia. They fought with a savagery and brutality unmatched by their many victims, and may have been primarily responsible for the downfall of the Masetian Empire. If not

# the heritage of vosgaard

for the unexpected arrival of the Brecht tower ships, as well as the Basarji from across the Sea of Dragons, the Vos might have destroyed the Anuireans as well. Despite the odds—one human race backed by the power of an evil god opposed by five races and the will of six gods—the Vos almost prevailed.

The elves made the difference.

Azrai corrupted the Vos with gifts and promises of power. He tricked the elves into believing that he, of all the human gods, would aid the elves in ridding Cerilia of humanity. The elves cared little for Azrai's gifts or his promised power; they simply wanted their forests back. Azrai lied to them and promised them a Cerilia as it was before. Most of the elves, desperate after the apparent failure of the *gheallie Sidhe*, followed him.

Supported by the elves on one side and many evil humanoids on the other, the Vos seemed unstoppable. Defenses withered before them as they screamed their war cries. They taught the evil orogs, goblins, trolls, and other humanoids the meaning of "no quarter" in their efforts to please Azrai.

Perhaps this is what turned the elves. Many historians speculate on the elves' eventual betrayal of Azrai, which came at the height of his power. Most believe the elves, a nature-loving race, saw the vast destruction caused to Cerilia's forests by the Vos and the humanoids in their pursuit of the humans, and realized that Azrai lied to them. A few believe the Vos and Azrai, certain of their victory in Cerilia, turned on the elves first, since Azrai had no intention of sharing the continent with his duped allies. The elves who survived the War of Shadow and those born in the centuries since seldom talk to humans at all, and never about this subject.

Regardless of the reason, the elves (with few exceptions) did eventually turn on Azrai and the Vos. Not nearly as brutal or destructive as the Vos, they made up for these deficiencies with determination and unity. Surprised and heartened, the Cerilian humans strengthened their resolve and fought back. This renewed effort gave the good deities of the humans the chance to stop Azrai once and for all—at Mount Deismaar, in the center of the land-bridge between Cerilia and Aduria.



While all the races of Cerilia suffered from the Battle of Mount Deismaar, the Vos, as a people, were nearly destroyed. Small, scattered tribes, decimated in battle, fled from their victorious but disorganized human brethren and headed east, away from the battle and civilization.

But civilization did not perish. The Brechts continued to colonize the Great Bay and the Khinasi took over the remnants of the Masetian's collapsed empire. More and more, the Vos felt the pressures of two thriving cultures. Their only escape was to the north.

And so the Vos claimed Vosgaard. Unlike the other human-claimed lands, Vosgaard never approached a semblance of empire or unity. Instead, these warring, quarreling tribes of brutal northmen "celebrated" their independence, their two new gods, and the gift of war that Azrai bequeathed to them.

Somewhere along the line, the gift of true magic was lost to the Vos. Few tribes ever developed written languages, and those that did usually fell to less civilized neighbors. The war priests of Belinik and the winter witches of Kriesha discouraged (and still discourage) the learning of true magic, partially in fear that their own powers will be diminished, but mostly because true magic reminds them of the lost god Vorynn and the Vos's ancient history.

Still, a few true wizards and lesser magicians have arisen among the Vos. Usually these individuals come to a bad end, but they often fit into legend as sorcerers, evil witches, and tricksters the Vos use to scare their own children at bedtime. If known, this attitude would seem ironic to the other human races where true and lesser magic are more common and the Vos barbarians serve as the villains of fairy tales and legends.

## the invasions of vosgaard

**T**wo attempts have been made at invading Vosgaard; neither met with even a semblance of success. The first came when Emperor Roele of Anuire subjugated much of eastern and central Cerilia to his will. Anuirean overlords or vassals already ruled much of the Rjurik, Brecht, and Khinasi lands, but Roele fled Vosgaard after a brief campaign. Proclaiming the weather and terrain to be too harsh for the lands to be of any use, the Emperor saved face among his people, but most historians agree that the outnumbered, outmaneuvered, and undersup-

plied Vos warriors placed a price so high upon their freedom that even the mighty armies of Anuire could not afford to pay it.

For centuries, the Vos dropped out of Cerilian history. Reports of raids against the eastern Brecht realms and the northern Khinasi lands filtered back to the Iron Throne at regular intervals. Occasionally, an angered overlord or governor would send an expeditionary or retributive force into Vosgaard to "teach those barbarians a lesson." Almost every time, these "lessons" ended up being taught to the teacher.

But for all their reputed warrior's knowledge and ability, the Vos never mustered a successful invasion of their own. Occasionally, they would overrun a Brecht or Khinasi province or even an entire realm, but within a few months, seasons, or—on rare occasion—years, the Vos would fall to quarreling and decimate their own forces badly enough that their slave-provinces could oust them. The Vos became known far and wide as a quarreling, basically stupid people—throwbacks to ancient human history, primitive and unable to learn.

## the free league of brechtür

Eventually, the Iron Throne lost its stranglehold on Cerilia's other lands. Anuirean overlords and occupying forces were either thrown out of lands they had held for centuries or absorbed into new, hybrid cultures. The Rjurik, the Khinasi, and the Brechts once again considered themselves free.

The Brechts experimented with their newfound freedom by forming the Free League of Brechtür (also known as the Brecht League). Intended to solidify the identities and policies of the Great Bay realms, it soon became an excuse to expand Brecht borders. The younger sons and daughters of Brecht nobility realized that, if they were to have any lands to rule when they came of age, they'd have to carve them out of someone else's territory.

Some of them chose the scattered, primitive Vos.

At first, these invasions were successful. The well-equipped Brecht armies rolled forth, fighting what little organized resistance the Vos could muster.

Angry and afraid, the



Vos retreated before them, finding themselves unable to stop armies so large with their traditional "overrun and occupy" tactics. Without a cohesive resistance or a strong leader, the Vos seemed doomed to lose.

Perceiving these difficulties, a lone Vos man stepped forward. He was not what the Vos consider a traditional leader. A trader who'd traveled to Brechtür and the Khinasi lands, Basil Zariyatam ("silver-tongue") often felt like an outsider among his own people. Certainly, his people did not feel comfortable around him. His bold attempt to seize leadership was met by significant opposition from the minor but disorganized Vos leaders who were in place.

Surprisingly, the Vos trader managed to stand up to the tsarevos ("war chiefs") who opposed him. He slew the first few in fine, brutal, Vos fashion, but spared the next challengers on the condition that they would march under his banner against the Brechts. Surprised, the defeated tsarevos, who expected to be slain out-of-hand, agreed. Soon, Basil Zariyatam gained a new name from his people: *tsarevic*, or "over-lord."

The Vos slowly pulled together under their tsarevic. Basil almost lost them, however, when he ordered his tsarevos to withdraw before the invading Brechts, putting up only token resistance. Since the Brechts invaded from the southwest, this meant the tsarevic proposed yielding the best lands in Vosgaard to the invaders without a fight. It looked like an endless host of tsarevos would line up against Basil again—and even if he could defeat them all, he would be left without capable leaders to execute his orders.

Fortunately, a priest of the winter witches of Kriesha stepped forward with a plan. Her name is lost to history—she is known only as *psepola* ("negotiator"—not a kind word in the Vos tongue). This priest offered the support of the winter witches to the tsarevic in exchange for recognition among the Vos people. At the time, Kriesha, a female goddess more interested in weather than war, had few followers among the leaders of the Vos tribes.

The tsarevic accepted. He convinced an important war priest of Belinik (again, the man's name is lost) to form a new church—the Temple of Might—in partnership with the *psepola* and Kriesha's sisterhood. The tsarevic pointed out that Belinik would then gain a following among the peasantry of the Vos

and the priest himself would become a co-regent. The priest, somewhat surprisingly, accepted.

Backed by this new order of priesthood, Basil fought only a few more battles with his tsarevos before getting them to accept his plan. Husbanding his forces and disguising the new unity of the Vos, he retreated slowly northward into Vosgaard as the weather worsened. Heartened by their apparent successes, the Brecht League's forces followed.

Winter sets in quickly in Vosgaard, and about the time the Brecht League overcame the goblins of Kal Kalathor (or so they thought), the cold of the heartless wastes swept over the land. Some say Kriesha, pleased by her newfound influence, spurred on an early, devastating winter at the tsarevic's request. Eager to end the winter campaign, the Brechts camped near the shores of Lake Ladan and the nobles among them met to divide up their newly gained southern Vosgaard territories.

This process took longer than it should have, as the tsarevic knew it would. He read the Brechts well. A race of merchants, he deemed them, and he knew not one of the young Brecht nobles would be satisfied until the exact terms of any division of land could be struck. The Brecht League's armies, now scattered and foraging for supplies, would freeze before any noble would give in to a "bad deal."

The tsarevic read his enemy correctly. At the height of an early storm, he and his Vos warriors swept down onto Lake Ladan and attacked the Brecht encampment. Unprepared and still bickering among themselves, many of the nobles and their best captains died without ever realizing what had happened. The Vos varsk riders rode through the camp, killing and burning as they came. Many brave Brecht warriors fled into the winter's cold without even challenging the varsk riders, convinced they were snow demons come to destroy them. They were more correct than they knew. The tsarevic had spent several months training his specialized snow troops, the *kaerevesk* ("ice warriors" or "frost legions") for fighting on the frozen terrain. Regardless of their training and preparation, the Brechts had no chance.

Few historians recall the fact, but the tsarevic had the help of the goblins in Kal Kalathor that day. While the goblin realm was not nearly as expansive then as it is today, seemingly endless burrows and tunnels housed many goblin warriors the tsarevic had commissioned from the goblin king. They rose up and dispatched the few Brecht troops that assembled south of the frozen shore.

The Vos boast that the only Brechts to survive the Battle of Lake Ladan were the ones



the Vos themselves were too tired to kill. This may be an exaggeration, but only just. Still vastly outnumbered and woefully undersupplied, the tsarevic's troops ravaged the Brecht League's forces and chased them over the Mistmoor or down into Kal Kalathor.

The war bands of the Vos followed their Brecht victims into Berhagen, Grevesmühl, and the land that has come to be known as Rzhlev. It took the Brechts months and even years to drive the Vos completely out of Berhagen and Grevesmühl, and despite the best efforts of the Royal Marines of Müden, Rzhlev remains in Vos hands to this day.

The tsarevic himself died sometime during this counter-invasion. While details surrounding his demise have not survived the intervening years, most Brecht historians believe that he tried to halt his Vos warriors. Rather than overrun Brechtür, it is said, Basil Zariyatam wanted to strengthen the southern and western borders of Vosgaard and to use his unified army as a way to forge the tribes of the heartless wastes into a unified whole.

The tsarevos who'd followed Basil to victory did not desire this enforced unity. Perhaps the "gift" of war that Azrai gave them continued to work its magic, or perhaps they chafed at the thought of bringing order to their own realms and instead desired to pillage and subjugate others. Regardless, even Vos who remember the tales of their great tsarevic admit that he must have been killed by his own troops.

Another legend surrounding the tsarevic's death has come to light recently. Rather than placing the blame for their hero's death on the greedy or bloodthirsty tsarevos, this new legend shifts the focus toward the priests of Belinik. Before the creation of the Temple of Might, the war priests of Belinik had been winning the struggle for the spirits of their people. Kriesha's temple, until now, appealed only to women and peasants fearful of the winter wind. In the wake of the tsarevic's success, new orders of the Temple of Might sprang up throughout the land, and some say those priests unwilling to serve two masters exacted cruel revenge upon Vosgaard's greatest hero.

## vosgaard today

**F**ractured by war, a harsh climate, and, some say, Azrai's dark curse, the Vos "nations" have never again united. Several men and women have tried to assume the mantle of tsarevic of Vosgaard since the death of their great hero, but none have succeeded. Each attempt at creating a Vos empire has been

more bloody and more futile than the last.

Still, more Vos realms exist today than at any time in history. The Vos population has reached an all-time high (according to Brecht and Khinasi scouting reports), and more of the realms have become permanent establishments rather than temporary outposts against anarchy.

But all this "civilization" has come at a cost. Always barbaric and independent, the Vos have fought against any form of unity for centuries. Only bloody-handed, powerful individuals have managed to carve out substantial realms in the land, and only their personal power and the power of their heirs have been able to maintain order.

At this time, only a few Vos realms have moved beyond absolute tyranny and toward kinder, more forward-thinking types of government. These realms have encouraged trade and discouraged ancient prejudice and superstition. Still, these "enlightened" realms remain in the vast minority and fight uphill battles against history, the chaotic Vos nature, and the priesthods of Belinik and Kriesha.

## religion in vosgaard

**I**n most Vos lands, the priests of Belinik and Kriesha hold sway. Where the high priest of a realm does not rule the actual land, he or she keeps a tsarevo on a short leash.

The priests of Belinik and Kriesha continue to dominate the spirits of most Vos. The war priests of Belinik continually cause strife among the people, whipping them into the battle-fevers dreaded by any who have ever encountered Vos warriors on the battlefield. When presented with no outward foes, the priests of Belinik turn this angry energy inward toward their own rivals and enemies, and especially toward any Vos leader foolish enough to oppose their will.

The priests of Kriesha maintain a more subtle grasp on their power. Seldom worshiped by the celebrated Vos warriors, Kriesha must work on the people's superstitious minds. Influencing the weather is their specialty, and the winter witches do not hesitate to use







their substantial powers when bending a realm to their will.

Two main churches exist in Vosgaard. The first, the Temple of Might, arose as a result of the tsarevic's deal with the priests of the two Vos deities, and still exists today. Designed as a temple glorifying both Belinik and Kriesha, each order of the Temple of Might has its own leanings, and one deity almost always claims preeminence over the other. Since priests of both religions exist within the Temple of Might, religious wars between and within different orders exist as a matter of course.

The One True Church of Vosgaard sprang up soon after the tsarevic's war. Supposedly, Belinik's followers created it in response to the Temple of Might. Preaching an even more warlike doctrine than the Temple of Might, the One True Church of Vosgaard seeks actively to destroy every other priesthood within Vosgaard. It seldom acts in subtle or mysterious ways, and its priests claim their directives come straight from Belinik himself. Given Belinik's chaotic nature, he may have ordered *both* orders to destroy each other in an effort to see which might prove the stronger.

The Vos do not doubt that Kriesha's winter witches have their own temples within Vosgaard, but all agree that these are secret orders existing in seclusion. Whispers say that *all* the winter witches belong to a secret temple and that those who worship in the Temple of Might do so merely to allay suspicion among Belinik's followers.

Few organized temples other than those dedicated to Belinik and Kriesha exist within Vosgaard. The Vos priests aggressively seek out nonbelievers and heretics, sacrificing them on blood-stained altars. Still, a few of the more "civilized" realms, whose rulers have rejected the two main churches of Vosgaard in an effort to remain in power, may be accepting of temples of other kinds. Halaña (Haelyn) and (curiously enough) Avani have made in-roads among a few of the Vos tribes. Lirovka (Ruornil), Iraikhan (Erik), Elyal (Eloéle), and Ayairda (Laerme) have minor followings in some of the civilized realms, and actual temples may spring up at any time.

## language and culture

**S**urprisingly, most Vos speak the same basic language. While a farmer in Yeninskiy may not use all the same words or phrases as a miner in Lutkhovsky, they can,

with a few false starts, comprehend each other. The Vos language has remained remarkably unchanged in the centuries since the tribes' arrival in the northern lands of Cerilia.

The Vos mistrust written languages and those who use them. Writing, they believe, is a tool of corrupt sorcerers who would use their magics to weaken the Vos warriors' minds and defeat them in battle. Naturally, the priests of Belinik and Kriesha preach this doctrine and, as influential as they are among the superstitious Vos, their words stand as law. Few Vos, even when traveling to other lands or mingling among other peoples, willingly learn to read or write. Beyond a few runes and symbols used to record numeric values and some basic concepts, the Vos have no written language that compares to that of the other human races.

However, most Vos tribes have developed a subtle and sometimes complex system of pictographs unmatched in Cerilia. Seemingly primitive, these *seleryek* ("picture-thoughts") communicate ideas and concepts with nearly as much detail as the finest Khinasi script. Indeed, these pictographs have become the basis for a unique type of priestly magic—spell tattoos (described in the *DM's Guidebook*).

In addition to their spoken and pictograph languages, many Vos warriors also know a third mode of communication. Known as *ytarlavek* ("silent-speak"), these gestures and hand signals are a secret weapon of the Vos warriors, and are guarded jealously and used sparingly. It is said among the Vos that any nonwarrior who attempts to learn *ytarlavek* will be struck mute by Belinik. As a result, most nonwarriors either do not know of this silent-speak or refuse to discuss it, even with each other.

Few Vos have time for activities that another human race would call art. Certainly, the Vos ballads rival the Rjurik story-songs, but they sound brutal and coarse to outside ears—almost like the speech of goblins and orogs. The practices of tattooing and ritually scarring their warriors seems barbaric to most other humans, but the Vos regard these as high honors placed on their recipients. Among the most evil of Vos tribes, torture and death have become an "art" form, and the priests of Belinik and Kriesha have improved upon this art over the centuries.

The Vos remain a utilitarian culture,





shunning frivolity and revelling in their own survival and the defeat of their enemies. Even the "civilized" Vos realms look on other cultures' art forms as decadent and wasteful.

## men and women in vosgaard

Opportunities for both sexes exist within the Vos culture, as long as the individuals in question can pass the right tests and avoid natural pitfalls. Both men and women can become warriors, priests, and leaders among the Vos people.

Children of typical Vos parents, regardless of their sex, are taught to fight and survive from an early age. Since most parents do not expect all their children to survive to adulthood or for themselves to survive through their heirs' childhood and adolescence, they try to educate and train their children as early as they can. A Vos child who proves him or herself unable to learn quickly may be neglected in favor of more promising siblings.

Still, Vos parents do not treat their children with unnecessary callousness or brutality. The Vos love their families with a ferocity rivaled only by the she-wolf's relationship with her cubs. Vos parents recognize the bleakness of their land and the harshness of their culture and strive to raise their children to survive in both.

Male and female children learn to help defend the home, the family, and the tribe before anything else. They become accustomed to death and destruction at an early age, and few Vos children grow to adolescence in the company of both their natural parents. Orphans become the responsibility of the tribe and are often taken into families that have lost other children before.

Those boys and girls who show a predilection for violence train as warriors. Most fail in their efforts to become full-time warriors and fall into secondary or support roles. Still, they continue to practice with any weapons they can find or make, which means most Vos peasants could probably fight off an equal number of trained infantry troops in a fair battle.

Children who pass the initial warrior tests become support troops for their

tribe's tsarevo during raids and disputes over territory. Those who survive and distinguish themselves gain extra training between battles and, with luck, become full-fledged warriors. Others continue as support troops or return to peasant life.

Adolescence is a trying time for apprentice warriors. Both males and females may be recruited by Belinik's priesthood to eventually serve as full-time temple warriors. Few of these recruits ever return to their families; most die in the service of the priesthood within a few years, while others become virtual slaves to the temple. Very seldom do any become priests of their order, and those who do almost never look back toward their family's needs or wants.

Females have the added pressure of "cultural necessity." The high mortality rate among the Vos demands an unusually high birth rate. Most females, if they do not show an immediate aptitude for war or some other necessary function, are pressured to serve "the demands of society." Once a Vos woman has borne a healthy child, she is encouraged to expand her family. Bearing children is considered an art that is far more rare than that of becoming a competent warrior.

Any female can escape the peasant life if she can find a temple of Kriesha. Unlike Belinik's priests, the winter witches seldom recruit selected candidates for service to the temple. They spread the word in secret, among females only, offering the freedom and protection of Kriesha's temple in exchange for service.

Many Vos women, especially those frustrated in their attempts to become warriors or leaders in their tribes, join Kriesha's temple. Few, however, progress beyond participatory levels. For most, joining the temple means simply having another master to serve. Some manage to advance among the winter witches if they have the necessary aptitude and capacity for cruelty that Kriesha demands of her priests and higher-level followers. Because Kriesha's order is secretive, few details exist concerning the winter witches' temples.

## the vos nobility

In this oppressive, dangerous culture, it may seem odd that the Vos have an almost enlightened view of tribal government. Heredity means little to the Vos. The best warrior of a tribe invariably becomes the tsarevo, and the best warrior and leader among many tribes will probably become the tsar, or regent, of a realm. If he is without a bloodline, he'll have to obtain one, but that can often be arranged through the temples of Kriesha or Belinik.



Blooded individuals, unless they are unaware of or hide their bloodlines, usually rise to positions as regents, lieutenants, or highly-ranked priests or warriors. They have to fight to gain and maintain their positions, however, because a bloodline alone does not demonstrate right-to-rule among the Vos. The priests of Belinik and Kriesha have, on many occasions, transferred bloodlines from "unworthy" scions to more "deserving" recipients . . . before the unworthy one met an untimely death.

In most Vos realms, warriors occupy the top positions in the land, while priests stand in their shadows but guide the true power of the realm. Their favored servants and henchmen occupy the next important level. Traders, merchants, and other nonwarriors serve the warrior classes and priesthoods, tolerated only because they serve a necessary function in the realm. Naturally, those who serve traders and merchants are the lowest of the low—the servants of servants. A common warrior in a Vos tribe might garner more respect than a rich guildmaster, even though the warrior probably has less power and influence.

Individuals without a tribe have no standing in Vosgaard. Independent adventurers, members of non-Vos races, and most especially, practitioners of nonpriestly magic hold virtual outlaw status. Even those non-Vos recognized as friends of Vosgaard or servants of Belinik or Kriesha can expect hostility and derision from the lowest of the Vos at times.

## old versus new

In Rovninodensk and a few other prominent Vos realms, the Vos people clash with each other over new, emerging values. The traditionalists—mostly the followers of Belinik, Kriesha, and the old ways of slaughter and death—call themselves the *torva* ("true," "one") Vos; those people they see as traitors to the old ways are called the *nona* ("upstart" or "new") Vos. The *torva* Vos, backed by a culture built upon centuries of practice and two powerful deities, still find they must battle against the new ideas of the *nona* Vos at every turn.

The *nona* Vos desire to turn the fantastic energies of the Vos people toward progress and unity. They want prosperous, strong realms. The *torva* look to clan loyalties and temple followings for their leadership and see the ways of the *nona* as soft and cowardly.

To an outsider, there may be little difference between the *torva* and *nona* Vos. Both fight their battles in true, brutal Vos fashion. Both have little tolerance for outsiders interfering in their feuds. But the *nona* Vos have developed a

less narrow outlook toward religion and government. The *nona* do not destroy temples to gods other than Belinik and Kriesha simply because they exist. They themselves both rebel and put down rebellions brutally, but they propose governing their realms in a more enlightened fashion than any Vos since Tsarevic Basil. Indeed, the *nona* Vos are trying to emulate the old tsarevic's methods in government—instead of trying to force their wills on clan chiefs and priests, they negotiate, and fight only when challenged directly.

In most realms, *torva* and *nona* Vos do not exist as organized factions. Where they do, the *nona* are almost always in the vast minority, but they remain a unified, dedicated group. The one advantage the *nona* have over the *torva* is that any *torva* attempt at organization will eventually collapse into internal struggling, clan and temple feuds, and chaos. As long as the *nona* move slowly and pick their battles, the *torva* will grow impatient and eventually weaken themselves.

At least that's the plan.

## character classes

**T**he Vos favor only a few character classes. While a Vos is eligible to be of any class, he should be prepared for the reaction his kinsmen will likely give him.

### warriors

Obviously the most popular character class among the Vos, most adventurers who come out of Vosgaard will be warriors. Valued as mercenaries, bodyguards, and cutthroats among the less savory elements of Cerilia, the Vos warrior's reputation throughout the land exists for well-justified reasons.

No Vos paladins are known to exist. While a few Vos have rejected their culture's evil gods and a few in the south worship Halaña, their society simply does not promote the ideal of paladinhood. Theoretically, a strong temple of Halaña may someday produce a Vos paladin, but this is unlikely in the near future.

Likewise, rangers among the Vos are rare. While



the Vos know their land and can live within its extremes, most reject the "oneness" with nature a ranger must accept. The Vos war with nature rather than work with it.

## priests

A smaller percentage of Vos citizens become priests than do members of most other human cultures. Priests have, over the centuries, gained great control in Vos society. They jealously guard this power and recruit new priests only when an exceptional individual is recognized or a dire need arises. As a result, those Vos who feel the "call" of Belinik or Kriesha but are unable to join an order in Vosgaard often travel to other parts of Cerilia, looking for temples where they can serve their deities. Since they tend to preach and practice the ways of Belinik and Kriesha regardless of where they are, this hardly endears Vos priests to other peoples.

As mentioned, a few other deities are worshiped in Vosgaard and independent priests of other gods do exist. Many independents become adventurers out of necessity—being hunted by priests of Belinik and Kriesha has that effect. Lirovka, Lana, Elyal, and a few others have small followings in the region.

## rogues

Vos thieves tend to be made up of two groups of people: those who showed little promise as warriors and refused duty as support troops (or returning to the peasantry), and those who have shown true aptitude for stealth and cunning. They tend to be more bloodthirsty than other Cerilian thieves, preferring banditry and lethal robbery over sneak-thieving or subtlety. The Vos actually tolerate thieves only as tools to be used against others. Any thief who gets caught using his skills on a Vos will be unlikely to learn from his mistake; the dead seldom learn anything.

The Vos do not respect bards as a class. Few Vos ever become bards; those who do are considered even more cowardly than thieves. Still, they can often find work as entertainers in the larger tribal courts or castles.

The priests of the Vos tolerate bards only as long as they do not display magical skills.

## the berserker kit

Certain Vos warriors may achieve notoriety as berserkers. These fanatical fighters display a lust for killing and a disregard for their own lives that is unmatched by other races of Cerilia. If the DM allows a PC to play a berserker, he should use the rules in *The Complete Fighter's Handbook* for that character kit, with the following modifications:

- ◆ The Vos berserker must have Strength 15 and Constitution 12 (or greater).
- ◆ Most Vos berserkers are holy warriors of Belinik, but this is not required. Berserkers who do not worship Belinik, however, are considered enemies of the faith and are outlawed by his priests.
- ◆ Nonblooded berserkers require a full turn of preparation to Go Berserk. A blooded Vos berserker may Go Berserk after warming up for five rounds (during which time he must perform all the usual rituals but may fight normally, as detailed in the *Complete Fighter*).
- ◆ Vos berserkers always choose an animal totem to represent their power. While this has no substantial game effect, it is important to the berserker. When under his berserk power, a warrior will often take on characteristics of the animal (ferocity, growling, etc.). Obvious choices for totem animals include varsks, bears, wolverines, wolves, and other predators native to Vosgaard. A blooded Vos berserker may choose the totem animal of her bloodline (see the section on blood abilities in the *Rulebook* for information on totem animals and bloodlines).
- ◆ A unit of berserkers as represented by a war card has the ability to charge even though the individuals are unmounted.

As with all character kits, the DM has the option to restrict the use of berserkers. Powerful, unpredictable, and extremely dedicated to their tribes and beliefs, Vos berserkers may not make ideal heroes, but they will add flavor to campaigns in Vosgaard.

## wizards and magicians

As mentioned, few Vos tolerate practitioners of true or lesser magic. They may warn off a bard or spit in the direction of a suspected thief, but most Vos will kill a wizard or magician on sight. It is a rare spellcaster who can wield his skills in Vosgaard and survive to tell the tale. Those few spellcasters who manage to survive in Vosgaard often become the most powerful and deadly of their class.



# cwmb bheinn

**Alignment:** Chaotic good.

**Provinces/Holdings:** Pinned between the Raven and the Lamia, the elven realm of Cwmb Bheinn cannot afford the luxury of isolation enjoyed by other elven lands in Cerilia. The protection of the Rhuannadaraight would go for naught without a determined ruler and some outside allies.

Province	Law	Temples	Guilds	Sources
Cilmwyaren (5/9)	AA (4)	-	GG (2)	FT (8)
Dinas Mawwy (3/9)	AA (1)	-	GG (1)	FT (7)
Holt (4/9)	AA (3)	-	GG (4)	FT (5)
Llywngsiele (6/9)	AA (6)	-	GG (2)	FT (5)
Van Garreg (3/9)	AA (1)	-	-	FT (0)
Wrexwyn (4/9)	AA (3)	-	GG (2)	FT (8)

**Abbreviations:** AA=Allan Alaigh (the Aelvenking); GG=Glynna Godeseyr (Rhuannadaraight Woodworks); FT=Finnegan Treusyyght

◆ **Law:** Allan Alaigh (*ME; R14; Vo, great, 41*) rules as much (or more) of the law in his realm as he feels his people will tolerate. A freedom-loving folk, the elves of Cwmb Bheinn nevertheless realize the desperate need for strong, centralized leadership. They may occasionally chafe at their lord's restrictions, but would rather do so than be destroyed by their enemies.

◆ **Temples:** Though the elves of Cwmb Bheinn revere the forest and perform many celebratory rituals of life, they have no organized religion and no temples.

◆ **Guilds:** The Aelvenking encourages interaction with neutral neighbors; as a result, Glynna Godeseyr (*FE; B9; Ma, major, 27*) trades with the humans of Yeninskiy and Kozlovnyy. The timber of Cwmb Bheinn, it is said, surpasses that of any oak harvested and treated by man, and the carpentry of the elves cannot be beaten by any mortal hands.

◆ **Sources:** It may seem odd to an outsider that the magical, elven realm of Cwmb Bheinn has, as its primary magical defender, a half-elven wizard. Still, Finnegan Treusyyght (*M1/2E; W10; Vo, great, 22*) is not just any half-elf. A world-traveler with great wisdom, Finnegan may be all that stands between Cwmb Bheinn and its downfall.

◆ **Provinces:** The Aelvenking rules all the provinces of Cwmb Bheinn. Less than a decade ago, he ruled two provinces now in the Raven's realm, Tommot and Zaliv, but they have been poisoned against him.

**Regency Generated/Accumulated:** 43/80 RP.  
**Treasury:** 22 GB.

**Army:** The Aelvenking commands the army of Cwmb Bheinn through his talented field commanders.

- ◆ 3 units of elf archers
- ◆ 2 units of elf pikemen
- ◆ 2 units of elf scouts

**Regent:** Known to his neighbors as the Aelvenking ("elf-king"), Allanlaigh adopted his new name, Allan Alaigh, in an effort to seem less remote to the humans that border his realm. In the elven tongue of Cwmb Bheinn, Allanlaigh means "high lord" or "ruler of the people," while Allan Alaigh translates more closely as "teacher" or "counselor."

Ancient even for an elf, Allan Alaigh has tried to live up to his new name, but he has much history to erase. When Allanlaigh's father ruled Cwmb Bheinn, the young prince saw the realm shrink as his father tried to resist the predations of human invaders. When the *gheallie Sidhe* brought war to the land, Al-

## player realms

lanlaigh watched as his father fought at the side of the elvenkin, in futility, against the short-lived but more numerous human race. When Azrai tricked the elves, Allanlaigh marched under his father's banner until his father fell, betrayed by the evil god's promises. Allanlaigh then became instrumental in turning a great number of the elves against Azrai, and Allanlaigh himself led an elven contingent to Mount Deismaar, where that ancient evil was destroyed.





And then Allanlaigh retired from the world of mortals. He led the remnants of his people back to the Rhuannadaraight and settled under the eaves of that mighty forest, content to close Cwmb Bheinn to the world. He bore humans no ill-will—even the Vos who followed Azrai—and trusted that they would leave him alone.

They did not. After a few short centuries, humans began driving farther and farther into the Rhuannadaraight. Unwilling to reawaken the sadness of the *gheallie Sidhe*, Allanlaigh pulled his people back and ordered his wizards to weave nets of spells around the center of the realm. He made it virtually disappear from the land of Cerilia.

This worked for a time. Humans lived just outside the shrunken realm of Cwmb Bheinn, unaware of the elves that watched and waited. The elven realm remained safe within its tiny bounds, unnoticed by the mortal world.

And then the Raven came. Less than a decade ago, the Raven breached the sanctity of Cwmb Bheinn and, before Allanlaigh could react, burned two whole provinces. One became a fetid swamp, the other a dead plain. Cwmb Bheinn stood revealed to the world.

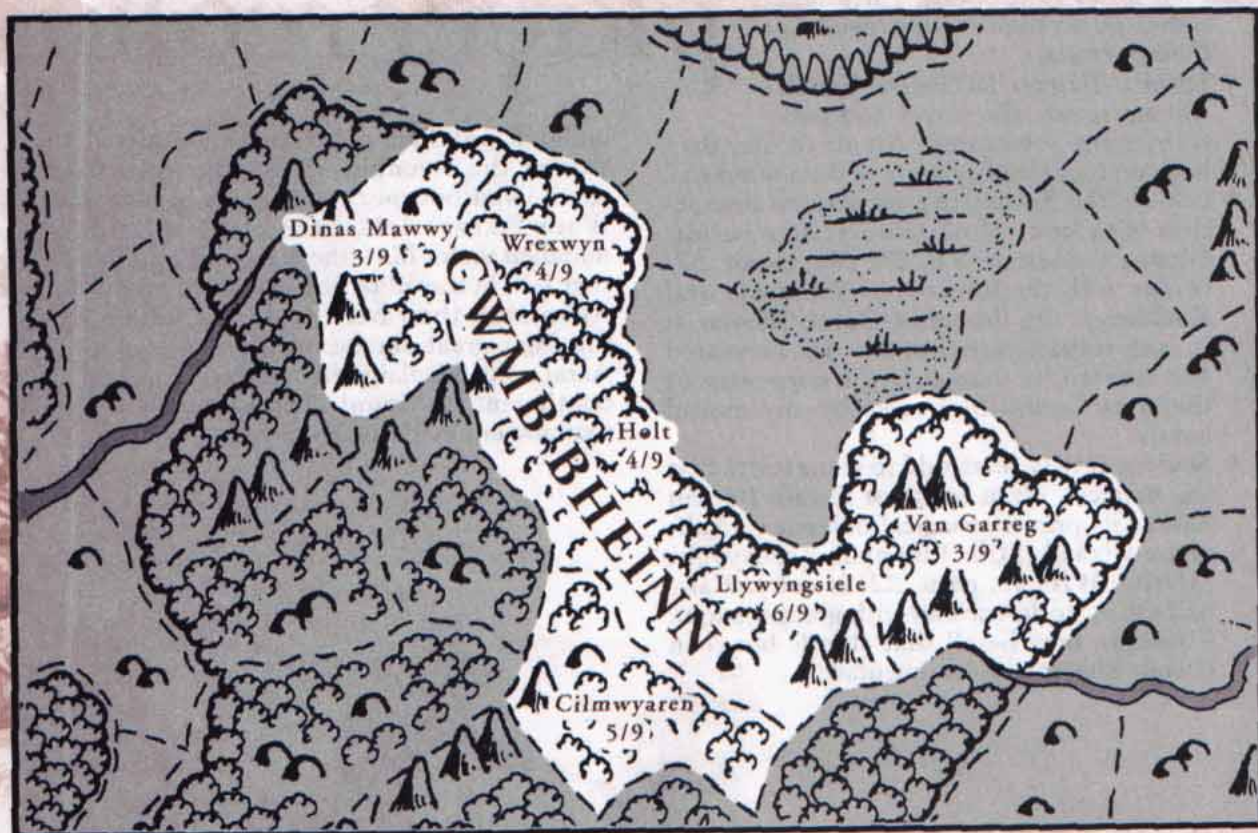
Another awnshegh, the Lamia, noticed the elven realm then and swore to destroy it. The reason is unknown, but she has made several efforts to rid the world of one of the few remaining elven strongholds.

Saddened by the end of Cwmb Bheinn's "Guarded Age," Allanlaigh has reacted by reaching out to his human neighbors. Changing his name and his attitude has accomplished marvels so far, and Allan Alaigh may be able to save his homeland yet.

♦ **Lieutenants:** The Aelvenking has several lieutenants who serve as leaders of the war camps throughout the realm, but only one is of particular note. Bram Aelfrund (MBR; F7) came to Cwmb Bheinn just before the Raven's onslaught and warned the Aelvenking of the danger. Though Bram, as a human, went unheeded (much to Allan Alaigh's regret), he has held a place ever since among the nobility of the realm.

**Important NPCs:** As old as the Aelvenking is, many would find it remarkable that he places so much trust and responsibility in the hands of young Glynna Godeseyr. Scarcely fifty years old, Glynna's slight, youthful appearance belies her keen intelligence and quick wit. When the Aelvenking needed someone to interact with the neighboring human realms, Glynna proved an irresistible choice—and an excellent one.

Over her (comparatively) short life, Glynna has traveled to the five corners of Cerilia. Her mother, an elf of Tuarhievel, married an elf of Cwmb Bheinn nearly five hundred years ago. A captain in charge of border patrols, Glynna's





father died scouting deep inside Kal Kalathor just after she was born. Glynna's mother, mourning his loss, took her infant daughter back to Tuarhievel.

Some say traveling at such an early age bred the wanderlust into Glynna. Twenty years later, still a child in elven years, Glynna left Tuarhievel to explore Cerilia. She found her way to the hidden land of Cwmb Bheinn and amazed its king with stories of her experiences.

Glynna, as much as anyone, awakened in the Aelvenking a desire to end his realm's isolation. Glynna has the gift of planting images and desires in the minds of those who hear her songs and stories. She touched the Aelvenking's heart and made him see his lands.

Now, she runs the Rhuannadaraight Woodworkers, cutting trees and milling wood for export to the outer lands. She and her guild members act as shepherds to their flocks of trees, however, only culling their "flocks" to improve the overall stock.

Save for the Aelvenking, all the realm's important figures are newcomers. Finnegan Treusyyght is more newcomer than most. He replaced the old Seer of Rhuannadaraight decades ago, but he has something "newer" in him than the most newborn elf-child of the realm: He is half human.

Finnegan's father left Cwmb Bheinn a millennium ago, after an argument with none other than the Aelvenking. The story says that the noble elf disagreed with the Aelvenking's isolationist policies and wanted to strike back at the humans before they burned the whole Rhuannadaraight around them. The Aelvenking resisted and eventually, the two friends parted. Allanlaigh remained to rule Cwmb Bheinn and Finnegan's father left the realm, supposedly intent on beginning a war against the humans.

None but Finnegan know his father's fate, but the fact that Finnegan is half-elven must mean something. When Finnegan speaks of his father, he speaks with sadness and love. He does not speak of his mother at all.

Finnegan came to Cwmb Bheinn six decades ago and took over for the old Seer only recently. He has helped to dissuade both the Raven and the Lamia in their attacks against the elven realm, but he recently lost several sources in Van Garreg in a magical battle with one of the awnsheghlien.

Rarely speaking with anyone but the Aelvenking, Finnegan wanders the realm, checking his sources and performing magics even other elves cannot understand.

**Description:** One of the five remaining ancient forests of Cerilia, the Rhuannadaraight is under siege. Humans live and work under its ancient trees, and whole stands have been cleared to make way for agriculture and "civilization." The elves of Cwmb Bheinn cannot resist for long alone. The beauty of their realm is fading and may disappear with the age of man.

◆ **Capital:** Like many elven realms, Cwmb Bheinn has no capital city, but Llywyngsiele ("elven grove") serves as the king's home province. Once, when the Rhuannadaraight stretched farther north, Llywyngsiele was the central province of the realm. Now, it looks out over the barren waste of the Raven's realm, hoping not to disappear forever.

◆ **Sites:** Desperate to hold onto what little forest they have left, the elves of Cwmb Bheinn live in small, armed camps throughout the realm. Only in Llywyngsiele does some semblance of the olden days remain, when elves roamed free under the eaves of the Rhuannadaraight.

**Allies:** An elven land and therefore suspect, Cwmb Bheinn has few true allies. It trades with Kozlovnyy and Yeninskiy, and has tried to set up some communication with Innishiere, but its enemies and its wary friends keep it cut off from any true aid.

**Enemies:** The Lamia despises the elven realm, probably because of its fading beauty. She will either possess it or destroy it, or be destroyed herself in her efforts. Since she has made alliances with the Raven, the destruction of Cwmb Bheinn seems only a matter of time.

**Players' Secrets:** Any adventurer or regent who begins the game in Cwmb Bheinn would know or have heard the following facts and rumors.

#### Facts

◆ Because Cwmb Bheinn is an elven realm, its regents can muster elven troops at one-quarter the normal mustering cost. In addition, because of the desperate unity that currently pervades the elven realm, the Aelvenking may muster troops for free if either the Raven or the Lamia attacks and the





provinces in which troops are mustered have at least average loyalty. If Cwmb Bheinn's situation drastically improves or the loyalty of the provinces where troops are mustered drops below average, this option is no longer available.

#### *Rumors*

- ◆ Bram Aelfrond has fallen in love with Glynna Godeseyr. The two are nearly equal in age, even though Bram, a human, appears to be much her senior. Surprisingly, rumors say that Allan Alaigh favors the match, but young Glynna secretly loves the Aelvenking as more than just a monarch. Each of the three appears to be aware of the others' feelings, and all walk on eggshells so as not to enact some romantic tragedy.
- ◆ Finnegan Treusyyght has some ability that gives him future-sight. He rarely reveals the nature of his visions, but rumor has it that he has told the Aelvenking of the exact day and time of Cwmb Bheinn's eventual fall. Many elves of Cwmb Bheinn await this day as if it were openly foretold, but a few wonder if something may be done to forestall Cwmb Bheinn's doom.
- ◆ The Aelvenking's hoard may be the reason that the Lamia and so many others covet Cwmb Bheinn. Though the elven realm boasts a modest treasury, some say Allan Alaigh possesses some of the most powerful and treasured magical and mundane items of Cerilia. Certainly, a king who has lived for more than a millennia must have had many opportunities to pad his coffers.
- ◆ Bram Aelfrond commands a small group of humans, elves, and half-elves known as the Llywyngen Guard.

#### *For the Regent Only*

- ◆ Allan Alaigh has heard that messages, sent in his name, have reached the regent of Rovninodensk. These messages invite Rovninodensk to attack the goblin realm of Kal Kalathor with the promise that Cwmb Bheinn will support the invasion. Allan does not know where these messages originated, but suspects the Lamia, or perhaps the Raven. If the most influential human realm in the area can be forced into a war with the goblins, then Cwmb Bheinn will have one less potential ally. Unfortunately, Allan Alaigh (or his successor) has no sure way of doing anything about the situation yet.



# melyy

**Alignment:** Neutral.

**Provinces/Holdings:** Small and sparsely settled, the unobtrusive realm of Melyy recently underwent an amazing metamorphosis. Most of its farmers and fishermen have abandoned their occupations to seek silver in the Orlenaskyy Mountains. Farms quickly became grubstakes and fisheries shipping agents as silver fever swept the land.

Province	Law	Temples	Guilds	Sources
Buzu (3/6)	-	-	HR (3)	FS (6)
Lukzor (3/4)	IP (3)	-	HR (2)	FS (1)
Temir (5/2)	IP (5)	LM (0)	HR (5)	-

**Abbreviations:** HR=Hook River (Jana Kuruven); FS=Firosk Slecktra ("Fell Secret-Speaker"); IP=Ivan Polavich (Tsor of Melyy); LM=Lida Marnorin (Temple of Might)

- ◆ **Law:** Tsor Ivan Polavich (MV; F6; Vo, major, 22) took over Melyy's rulership nearly two decades ago, when hardly more than two dozen families lived in all three provinces. Now the tsor, crippled by a battle wound, tries desperately to rule a tiny realm nearly a hundred times its former population.
- ◆ **Temples:** As sick as Ivan was of war, he was even sicker of war priests. He actively discouraged the founding of temples in Melyy and was, until recently, successful. Now the Temple of Might in Velenoye, led by the Winter Witch Lida Marnorin (FV; Pr10, Kriesha; Az, minor, 16), has moved into Melyy.
- ◆ **Guilds:** Jana Kuruven (FV; T8; Ma, minor, 14) must have some Brecht blood in her—at least that's what her detractors say. She established the first mine at the source of the Hook River only a few days after a lucky prospector found the first silver; now she controls virtually all trade within the realm.
- ◆ **Sources:** The dread Firosk Slecktra (F?; W17; An, great, 35) of Grovnekevic controls the only source in Melyy and, much to the realm's relief, seldom visits her holding.
- ◆ **Provinces:** Lukzor and Temir, once the farming and fishing provinces of Melyy, remain under the control of the tsor. No one has yet claimed rulership of Buzu.

**Regency Generated/Accumulated:** 16/90 RP (Tsor Ivan Polavich).

**Treasury:** 22 GB (Tsor Ivan Polavich).

**Army/Navy:** Until recently, the tsor has had little need for an army. Fortunately, he hasn't had any trouble raising a small one:

- ◆ 3 units of irregulars
- ◆ 1 unit of mercenary infantry
- ◆ 1 unit of scouts

His navy includes ships used by the Hook River guild for the export of silver and the import of men and supplies:

- ◆ 3 keelboats
- ◆ 1 drakkar
- ◆ 1 longship

**Regent:** Tsor Ivan Polavich gained fame as a warrior in the wars between Velenoye and the Sword Rust Tribes. He became such a respected leader that, when he lost his left foot in battle, Velenoye's former tsar awarded him rulership of tiny, unimportant Melyy as a reward rather than following the usual Vos practice of slaying or abandoning crippled warriors.

At the time, Melyy's sole purpose for existing was to provide food for Velenoye's troops. The tiny fishing village of Rodina had a small garrison of soldiers dedicated to raiding the countryside periodically as a form of taxation. Ivan changed that. He encouraged his troops to protect Melyy's peasants from predations of the Sword Rust Tribes and other creatures from the mountains, and to help settle disputes between landowners. Melyy began, very slowly, to grow and prosper. Still, even a single bad winter or vicious raiding party would have spelled disaster.

Then one of Ivan's old soldiers, looking around Buzu for a farmstead he could settle after his retirement, discovered silver near the base of the eastern Orlenaskyy Mountains. He brought the word back to Rodina and, within a few weeks, the sleepy realm of Melyy turned into a land teeming with prospectors. The tsor, much to his dismay, has had to come out of retirement in a desperate effort to maintain—some would say "restore"—order in the realm.



Though Melyy has not become directly involved in the torva vs. nona struggle, most people believe that the tsor would side with the progressive nona faction if the situation demanded an alliance. Currently, silver fever claims more attention in the realm than any struggle for political identity.

♦ **Lieutenants:** The tsor has two lieutenants. The first came with him from Velenoye and fought with him against the Sword Rust Tribes. Lenora Wolfskein (FV; R6) was a tough woman in her youth and has gotten tougher as she approaches middle age. She remains fiercely loyal to Ivan and guards him and his realm against those who would deprive him. If war were to come to Melyy, she would serve as the realm's tsareva.

The other lieutenant is a newcomer. Luther (MBR; T5) came from Brechtür some three years ago and ingratiated himself with the aging tsor. He helped improve what little trade Melyy sponsored at the time, and was in the midst of starting up his own guild when the silver madness hit. Now, he oversees negotiations between the tsor and the Hook River miners.

**Important NPCs:** Jana Kuruven, guildmaster of the Hook River miners, may be the most important person in the realm—even more so than the tsor. Using guile, good timing, and a ruth-

less business sense, she has managed to parlay a prospector's lucky strike into a booming mining business. Silver fever has seized the realm of Melyy, and nearly everyone is trying to make a profit from it—and they all have to do it through Jana.

The Hook River guild does not limit its efforts to mining. Jana owns most of the stores, inns, and outfitters in Melyy. She still steps lightly around the tsor, however, and has not made any obvious attempts to wrest the rulership of the realm from him. Some believe that if Jana took over the rulership of the province of Buzu (which she could do easily), this accommodating relationship would end.

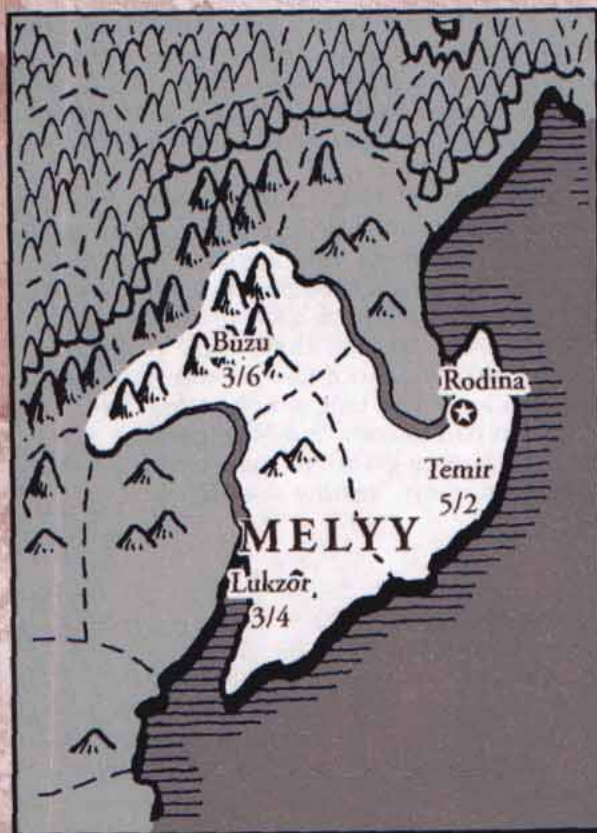
Yuri the Elder (MV; F5) launched all the trouble surrounding the mines. He found the first silver in the eastern Orlenaskyy and almost got killed for his trouble. Some say the tsor tried to eliminate the old soldier before word of the discovery got out; others believe Jana took measures to establish and maintain her monopoly. Whichever is the case, Yuri the Elder has disappeared into the mountains. Every so often his son, Yuri the Younger (MV; R6), comes into Rodina or one of the mining camps to buy supplies. Yuri the Younger always pays with pure silver.

**Description:** Protected from the coldest north winds by the Orlenaskyy Mountains and the tall trees of Grovnekevic Forest, Melyy has a fairly moderate climate most of the year. Winter lasts only four or five months and the summer growing season can stretch to three or even four months.

Melyy is no longer known as a farming and fishing realm. Mining camps have sprung up all throughout Buzu and even in the hills of Lukzor, and silver fever fills the settlements of Temir. Many farms have been sold or abandoned by Vos peasants eager to search for silver.

♦ **Capital:** Silver has made Rodina wild. Once a fishing village with the huts and long, low structures typical of Vos peasant settlements, Rodina has branched out with hastily constructed, ill-conceived "neighborhoods." The city lurches forward and backward at will, ready to become a true city or a ghost town at any time.

♦ **Sites:** Lawless mines and mining camps owned by the Hook River guild dominate Buzu. Any man or woman arriving there can work the mines or camps (according to personal talents and preference) as long as they supply themselves and pay an 80 percent share to the guild. This usurious percentage hardly daunts those who come to the area, as many believe they can strike it rich quick, pay off Jana Kuruven, and get out fast.





**Allies:** Velenoye was considered Melyy's fatherland until recently, and should (but might or might not) be its closest ally. This friendship has not been put to the test recently, and the raiders of Velenoye may develop a taste for Melyy silver.

**Enemies:** Melyy once supplied Velenoye with food and other goods so that its raiders could concentrate on business and fight the occasional war against the Sword Rust Tribes. The orogs and other humanoids of the mountains have not forgotten this. In addition, they can't be happy about the Vos pulling tons of silver out of "their" mountains.

**Players' Secrets:** The following secrets and rumors would be known to any character who adventures or rules in Melyy.

#### Facts

◆ Any regent who collects GB from province taxation or from guild or temple collection in Melyy can go boom or bust, depending on the output of the mines. If the regent rolls the maximum result possible on a roll to collect GB, the mines in that province (or near that holding) have experienced a boom. The regent rolls again, adding the new result to the original roll (only one bonus die roll is allowed). So, if Tsor Ivan applies moderate taxation to the province of Temir (5), he rolls 1d6+1. If he rolls a 6 (for a result of 7 GB collected), he may roll again and add the result to the 7 GB. If he rolls another 6, he gains a total of 13 GB.

If the regent rolls the *minimum* result possible, the mines experienced a bust. No GB are generated by the nearest mines this domain turn, so the regent collects no GB. The regent also risks a 1-level reduction in the holding or province he tried to collect from (since people have abandoned their daily lives to work the mines). There is a 10% cumulative chance that a holding will drop one level; if the mines go bust on a consecutive turn, the chance increases (after six consecutive turns, for example, the chance increases to 60%). Level 0 holdings are not reduced (destroyed) in this way, and levels can be restored through normal means.

A taxation or collection roll that has the possibility of generating a 0 or negative number (because of modifiers) cannot go boom or bust.

#### Rumors

- ◆ Yuri the Elder has found the "mother lode" somewhere in the eastern Orlenaskyy Mountains. Unfortunately, a band of orogs has found him and is currently torturing him to find out the location of the mine. Yuri the Younger needs help to rescue his father, but Jana Kuruven will help only if the son reveals the mine's location. She has kept Yuri from appealing to the tsor so far.
- ◆ The same rumor as above, but the tsor and Jana's roles are reversed. The tsor doesn't want word of the mine leaked out—he fears that more treasure hunters will invade his kingdom. Jana wants to help rescue Yuri in the hope that he'll share some mineral wealth.
- ◆ Both Jana and the tsor favor the nona faction that is slowly and secretly winning over Melyy's people, but each wants to be proclaimed the favorite of the progressive Vos. Each has resolved to look good in the eyes of the emerging nona Vos—or to make the other look bad.

#### For the Regent Only

- ◆ When Melyy and Velenoye broke off their official vassal-overlord relationship, it was not without hard feelings. Melyy had suffered several winters of barely supporting itself, much less being able to contribute to Velenoye's coffers. Tsor Ivan proposed that Velenoye send Melyy a "peace chest"—a small treasury of GB and emergency supplies the tiny realm could use to get back on its feet and maintain itself. The current Tsara of Velenoye refused and told Tsor Ivan that he and his people could fall off the Luthkovsky Peninsula; Velenoye owed nothing to Melyy and vice versa.

This breakdown occurred mere weeks before Yuri's silver strike. Now, the Tsara of Velenoye wonders if Tsor Ivan planned the whole thing. Tsor Ivan and Jana Kuruven have both heard that Velenoye's raiders plan an attack on Lukzor and possibly a naval assault on Rodina. They've kept this rumor quiet so far (fearing a panic), but they desperately need a solution.





# rovninodensk

**Alignment:** Neutral.

**Provinces/Holdings:** Civil wars and battles for succession decimate Rovninodensk's provinces once or twice every generation. Nona Vos currently have the upper hand, though their rule is far from stable.

Province	Law	Temples	Guilds	Sources
Almeysk (1/4)	AT (1)	LV (1)	-	-
Chelyatev (1/4)	AT (0)	LV (1)	Ma (1)	PM (3)
Donorssk (2/3)	AT (1)	LV (1)	VV (1)	-
Dzhamhou (1/8)	DV (1)	LV (1)	DV (1)	-
Glaznyy (0/7)	-	-	-	PM (6)
Loden (2/5)	AT (1)	RM (1)	VV (2)	PM (4)
Pavstrakhan (0/5)	-	-	Ma (0)	PM (3)
Pervezniki (2/3)	DV (1)	LV (2)	DV (1)	-
Tobol (2/3)	AT (2)	LV (1)	VV (2)	PM (2)
Ufhevs (0/7)	-	-	Ma (0)	PM (6)
Urgtau (0/7)	-	-	-	PM (6)
Ziass (4/1)	AT (3)	RM (3)	VV (2)	PM (1)
		-	-	Ma (2)

**Abbreviations:** AT=Andrei Tcherninsky (Tsarevo of Rovninodensk); DV=Danica Vorac; LV=Leonid Vosken (Temple of Might); RM=Remy Martin; Ma=Markovlan Saravok (Sergei Ukhtra); VV=Vycheha Vychotkha (Lake Ladan Traders); PM=Petra Morinoi

- ◆ **Law:** The current ruler of Rovninodensk, a former boyar named Andrei Tcherninsky (MV; F12; Vo, major, 22), wrested control of the realm from the former torva Vos leadership in the realm's most recent civil war, then appointed himself tsarevo of the land. Torva factions, led by Danica Vorac (FV; F6; Re, minor, 11), the daughter of the realm's former regent, have fled Rovnograd for the relative safety of the northern provinces.

- ◆ **Temples:** The primary church operating in Rovninodensk is the Temple of Might. Its former leaders backed the torva Vos heavily in the last war for succession, and burnt temples and shrines to Kriesha and Belinik litter the countryside. The new regent of the Temple, Leonid Vosken (MV; Pr7, Belinik; Ba, minor, 19), has taken a more bipartisan approach, though he must support the torva Vos.

A small temple to Lirovka has arisen in nona lands, headed by the young Dmitras Pyovitch (MV; Pr5, Lirovka; Vo, major, 24), but it faces an uphill struggle against traditional Vos tendencies. So far, Andrei has not endorsed any temple as the official church of Rovninodensk.

- ◆ **Guilds:** Two of the three guildmasters of Rovninodensk owe their positions to the current tsarevo. The leader of the Markovlan Saravok (a tiny guild specializing in the breeding of varsk), Sergei Ukhtra (MV; F4/T7; Br, tainted, 6), was once the tsarevo's chief lieutenant. A bandit guild run by Danica Vorac operates only in the north, where it robs the peasantry to support the torva regent.
- ◆ **Sources:** A main reason that the nona bid for the throne succeeded lies in the hands of a slight, sickly Vos wizard named Petra Morinoi (FV; W10; Ma, major, 28). Said to be a follower of Lirovka and an ally to the new temple, she built up her power secretly, then threw her support behind Andrei when it mattered. Now, she watches the eastern borders of the realm, hoping neither the Raven nor the Manticore will attempt to test the new regent.
- ◆ **Provinces:** The tsarevo rules the capital province of Ziass, plus the provinces of Tobol, Loden, Donorssk, Almeysk, and Chelyatev. The torva leader Danica rules Dzhamhou and Pervezniki. The remaining provinces of the realm remain uncontrolled.

**Regency Generated/Accumulated:** 20/5 RP (the tsarevo); 6/14 (Danica Vorac).

**Treasury:** 9 GB (the tsarevo); 22 (Danica Vorac).

**Army/Navy:** The armies of Rovninodensk paid a terrible price for the realm's current watchful peace. The tsarevo controls the following troops:

- ◆ 2 units of infantry
- ◆ 2 units of Rovarsski (varsk riders)
- ◆ 1 unit of archers

Danica Vorac and her torva supporters can field some troops as well:

- ◆ 3 units of irregulars
- ◆ 2 units of scouts



**Regent:** Once one of many boyars favored by the old torva hierarchy, Andrei Tcherninsky still bears many of the ritual scars and tattoos given to only the most powerful Vos warriors, but no doubt exists in anyone's mind that this tsarevo favors the ways of the nona Vos. Andrei fought his way toward power and influence under the former tsarevo's rulership and turned against his lord only when the man tried to have Andrei assassinated. After many months of civil war, Andrei Tcherninsky personally slew the former tsarevo and assumed the Yennik Throne.

A large man in his mid-thirties, Andrei wears his steel-black hair long and braided in the traditional Vos fashion. His deep blue tattoos stand out against his somewhat grayish skin, making his grim countenance all the more frightening. Seldom laughing or even smiling, the new tsarevo epitomizes the grim ideal of a Vos warrior. Still, grim does not mean "bad" or "cruel" in Andrei's case—in the months since his overthrow of the torva regime, he has killed only those who have made themselves his enemies.

♦ **Lieutenants:** Sergei Uhktra, the varsk breeder, stood by Andrei's side during his fierce battle with the old tsarevo. Sergei himself slew the Temple of Might's former regent when the priest called upon Belinik to curse Andrei's sword arm. Sergei then served as the new tsarevo's lieutenant until they put the realm in order. Now, Andrei has rewarded him with vassalage and regency of his own. Sergei hopes Andrei will consider his son, Stefan (MV; F2; Br, tainted, 3), as a possible candidate for the vacant lieutenantcy, but the tsarevo has made no sign.

**Important NPCs:** Two of the most important people of the realm are the Papanovich brothers, Mikhail (MV; F4; An, minor, 12) and Nikoli (MV/Br; T7; An, minor, 6). Born of different mothers (Nikoli's was a captured Brecht slave, a woman whose appearance and character he greatly favors), they grew up in the old tsarevo's court, hating him for executing their father over some trifling indiscretion. They learned something of diplomacy and dissembling there and survived by becoming traders for the throne. They traveled as far west as Grevesmühl and as far south as Kozlovnyy, and learned much from their experiences.

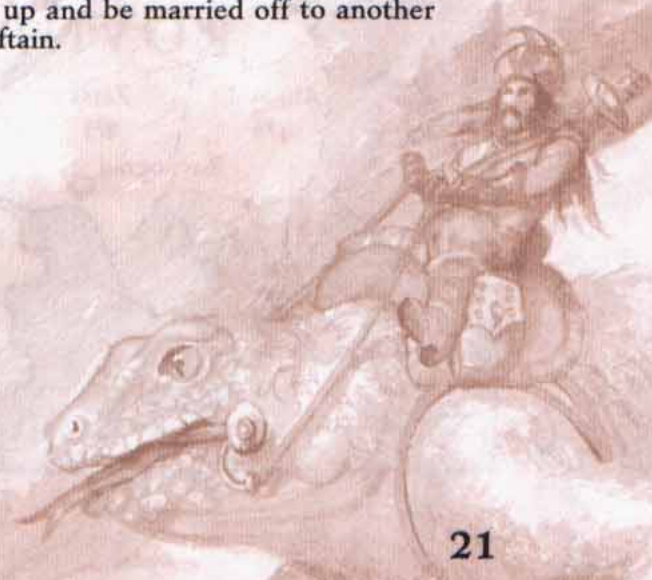
When Andrei battled the old tsarevo, the brothers backed Andrei secretly (at first) and then openly. Some say the brothers arranged to sneak Andrei inside the Yennik Tower so he could confront the old tsarevo while their armies battled outside.

As a reward, Andrei allowed the two to establish guild holdings in Rovninodensk. Now, as regents of the Vychega Vychotkha (or "Lake Ladan Traders") trade guild, they've begun to turn Rovninodensk into one of Vosgaard's few economic powers. They pay Andrei several gold bars per season (depending on their profits) to keep him from looking at their financial dealings too closely; some say they run trade routes into Kal Kalathor, Kozlovnyy, Brechtür, and beyond. Both are nona supporters, but may have their own ideas for the evolution of the Vos.

Whether the mysterious Petra Morinoi has any ties to the old court of Rovnograd, none can say. It is now known that she aided Andrei in his rise to power, proving the war chief may have been plotting an overthrow long before the old tsarevo tried to have him "removed" because of his rising power and popularity. Petra certainly provided key support for the outnumbered nona Vos, and turned what could have been a minor revolt into a successful rebellion.

Some say Petra had her own reasons for backing Andrei; this rumor, combined with the superstitious prejudice most Vos feel toward spellcasters, has caused much fearful speculation. Petra seems to have a grudge against Danica Vorac (the feeling is certainly mutual), but the wizard pays more attention to the wild eastern provinces of the realm than Danica's hiding place in the north.

Danica Vorac grew up strong and proud amid the splendor of Rovnograd. At the age of ten, two of her father's household slaves abducted her and fled the city, hoping to use her as a hostage on their trip back to their home country. Little Danica, however, wriggled free of her bonds during the night, slew both slaves, and found her way home alone. When she presented her father with the ears of her victims, he realized she deserved more than to grow up and be married off to another Vos chieftain.





Trained as a warrior and a leader, Danica remained loyal to the Yennik Throne, and even when she reached her prime, made no move to overthrow her father. Now, living on the run from the new tsarevo's troops, she may regret that decision. Living in the wild has only honed her resolve to occupy the Yennik Throne, and if she must take it over the dead bodies of Andrei Tcherninsky and Petra Molinoi, so be it.

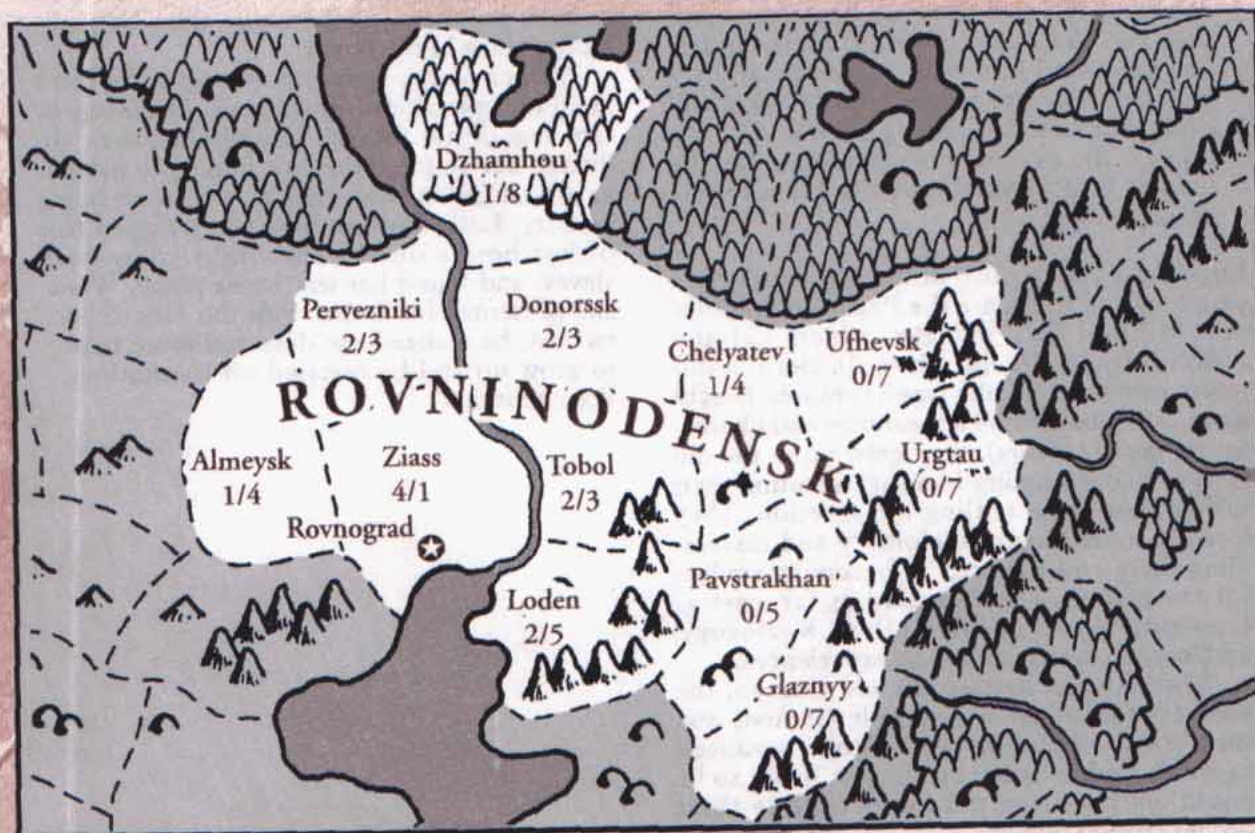
Danica fuels the superstitious fear that most of Rovninodensk's peasants harbor toward the wizard Petra Molinoi. The two women have developed a hatred for each other that borders on obsession.

**Description:** The flat, open provinces in the center of Rovninodensk have no protection from the cold north winds that whip down from the peaks of the Drachenaur and Orlenaskyy Mountains. The fields of winter wheat that grow here get trampled under warrior feet as often as they feed the population, and only the fortitude of the realm's people allows them to overcome famine. Still, Rovninodensk has been called one of the most pleasant, civilized realms in Vosgaard, which should tell even the most casual observer something about the area.

♦ **Capital:** Built to commemorate the Battle of Lake Ladan (1140 HC), the capital city of Rovnograd has been burned and pillaged many times, but never by an outside conqueror. Only civil wars and battles for succession cause this city to be razed, and then, even the most bloodthirsty conquerors leave certain parts of the city alone. The gleaming minarets of the Yennik and Aktyubin Towers have stood tall and straight for centuries, though the buildings around them have been destroyed and rebuilt many times.

♦ **Sites:** In olden days, the mountains in Loden and Tobol brought vast amounts of coal, iron, and copper to the forges of Rovnograd. Those reserves have long since been mined out, but it is well known that the tunnels have become a haven for runaway slaves and strange monsters. The mountains in Ufhevsk, Urgtau, and Glaznyy have never been thoroughly prospected and may hold untold treasures (and unimaginable dangers) for the bold miner.

**Allies:** The Papanovich brothers have tried to establish good relations with the Vos-Khinasi realm of Kozlovnyy, but travel between the two realms has never been easy. Kal Kalathor





seems willing to leave Rovninodensk in peace for the time being, but it charges heavy tariffs for passage through its land. Rovninodensk has the same problem with Grevesmühl, another trading partner to the west. Passage through the Mistmoor and Rzhlev has never been easy, and few dare the trip on a regular basis.

**Enemies:** While Velenoye can't really be called an enemy, it certainly isn't a friend to Rovninodensk. On many occasions, Andrei Tcherninsky and his agents (usually the Papanovich brothers) have tried to establish a link to the sea through Velenoye, only to be double-crossed. The raiders of Velenoye seem to be engaged in a game of "how far can we push" with Andrei, and they may soon learn the limits of the tsarevo's patience.

The Raven and the Manticore are not friendly to Rovninodensk. Neither has engaged in open warfare against the Vos realm, but the tsarevo feels it is only a matter of time before one awnshegh or the other feels the need to expand his borders.

**Players' Secrets:** The following information should be made available only to characters who adventure within (or rule) the realm of Rovninodensk.

#### *Facts*

- ◆ Famous for his varsk husbandry, Rovninodensk's Markovlan Saravok can add a +5 bonus to any attempt to establish a trade route with another Vos realm, as long as varsk are a part of the deal. For every season the trade route is in effect, the other realm may muster one unit of varsk cavalry.

#### *Rumors*

- ◆ Some say the savage elves of Tuar Annwn secretly support the torva Vos of Rovninodensk, in the hopes of keeping the largest nearby human realm weak and divided. If so, they may have offered Danica Vorac shelter along the eastern banks of the Annwnaloch, and may even provide elf archers for her use in time of need.
- ◆ Why did Petra Morinoi support Andrei on his rise to the throne? She revealed her existence not only to the other regents of Rovninodensk, but to the power-hungry Raven as well. Does the wizard of Rovninodensk have some secret agenda she desperately needs the regent to support? How will the warrior tsarevo react when the wizard calls for repayment of his debt? These questions haunt the people of Rovninodensk.

- ◆ Most people believe that the Temple of Might secretly supports Danica Vorac in her quest to regain her father's throne. If so, they may have a few units of troops (probably irregulars but possibly mercenaries) hidden in provinces where the Temple still has influence. These units could swing the balance in any battle between Danica and the tsarevo.

#### *For the Regent Only*

- ◆ The NPC ruler of Cwmb Bheinn has sent a secret message to the regent of Rovninodensk. The regent of that elven realm offers 10 GB and a magical item (determined by the DM) from his private hoard to the regent of Rovninodensk if the tsarevo will conquer and hold the two northeastern provinces of Kal Kalathor (those bordering Lake Laden and the Raven's domain). The regent of Cwmb Bheinn declares his intention to invade Kal Kalathor at the same time, in hope of lessening the goblin realm's power within the region.





# Yeninskiy

**Alignment:** Chaotic neutral.

**Provinces/Holdings:** Broken by the might of the Iron Hand Orog, the Khinasi-Vos realm of Merasaf fractured into two large states. To the southeast, modern Merasaf became a united Khinasi state, while Yeninskiy became a divided land torn between two cultural identities.

Province	Law	Temples	Guilds	Sources
Aral (3/2)	BW (3)	TCV (2)	RY (0)	-
	-	-	NW (3)	-
Btumi (3/2)	LT (2)	SH (1)	RY (1)	-
Dzhl (3/2)	BW (3)	TCV (3)	NW (3)	-
Hilov (4/3)	RY (3)	-	RY (3)	-
Rig (1/8)	-	-	RY (0)	VL (6)
Stnerba (2/5)	-	-	RY (0)	VL (5)
Svesmail (3/2)	LT (3)	SH (3)	NW (2)	-
Topek (2/7)	BW (2)	-	RY (0)	VL (6)
Urysk (2/3)	LT (1)	SH (1)	NW (1)	-
Vychek (3/4)	RY (2)	-	RY (3)	-
Vyslav (3/4)	RY (2)	-	RY (3)	-

**Abbreviations:** BW=Barak Wohlken; LT= Lita Torsk; RY=Raiders of Yeninskiy (Yousera Brotherhood); NW=Neva Wohlken; TCV=One True Church of Vosgaard (Suvek the White); SH=Sword of Halaia (Corazon Vladimirovich); VL=Vore Lekiniskiy (the Dragon of Vstaive Peak)

- ◆ **Law:** Three regents control most of the law in nine of Yeninskiy's 11 provinces. One, the Tsarevo Barak Wohlken (MV; R11; Ba, major, 31), represents his clan in traditional Vos fashion. Lita Torsk (FKh; F5; Vo, major, 23) learned her governing style from her father, a Merasaf noble, though her "republic" still has strong Vos undertones. A band of raiders and pirates calling itself the Yousera Brotherhood considers itself the law in three of the largest and most prosperous Yeninskiy provinces, though a more dangerous band of mercenary cutthroats and killers can hardly be found outside the Krakennauricht.

- ◆ **Temples:** Once, Merasaf's Basarji religions dominated this region, but the influence of Vosgaard has prompted a change. The One True Church of Vosgaard even made inroads into the Raven's domain before the awnshegh killed its first regent. The Sword of Halaia, a sister-sect to Merasaf's Shield of Halaia, still serves the Khinasi of the southern-middle provinces.

- ◆ **Guilds:** The Yousera Brotherhood controls most guild activity along the coast. They "trade" with anyone, preying on the merchants of Merasaf and dealing with the Iron Hand or the Raven at a moment's notice.

Inland, Neva Wohlken (FV; T7; Ba, major, 23) has tried to bridge clannish and cultural gaps by running a small food and ore guild.

- ◆ **Sources:** The only wizard of Yeninskiy appears to be another of Cerilia's ancient, rare dragons. Recently woken from his centuries-long slumber, the dragon known only as Vore Lekiniskiy (also known as the Dragon of Vstaive Peak) has not yet taken an active talon in local matters.

- ◆ **Provinces:** The Wohlken Clan rules the northwestern provinces of the realm—they are sworn enemies of the Raven. Aral, or "Raven's Gap," is their home province; Topek and Dzhl guard their flanks. Btumi, Svesmail, and Urysk bisect the realm and are ruled by the Torsk "Clan." Vos in name only, their leader tries to enforce her laws as she believes a Khinasi noble would.

The Yousera Brotherhood controls the three coastal provinces of Hilov, Vychek, and Vyslav, much to their people's lament. Still, they are probably better off than in the wild, unruly provinces of Stnerba and Rig.

## Regency Generated/Accumulated:

16/18 RP (Barak Wohlken)  
14/6 RP (Lita Torsk)  
24/2 RP (Yousera Brotherhood)

## Treasury:

22 GB (Barak Wohlken)  
8 GB (Lita Torsk)  
30 GB (Yousera Brotherhood)

**Army/Navy:** An embattled and besieged realm, Yeninskiy's regents must maintain armies of considerable strength.

Barak Wohlken:

- ◆ 3 units of Slekazniy Guards (varsk riders)
- ◆ 2 units of Topek Kzensky (scouts)
- ◆ 1 unit of Aral's Armor (elite infantry)

Lita Torsk:

- ◆ 1 unit of Khinasi knights
- ◆ 2 units of Vos archers



**Yousera Brotherhood:**

- ◆ 2 units of Mercenary infantry
- ◆ The Captains' Guard (elite Vos infantry)

The Yousera Brotherhood also controls three drakkars, one zebec, and two longships. Each is fully equipped with a complement of seaworthy troops (reavers/marines).

**Regents:** The tsarevo Barak Wohlken once led Merasaf's mostly-Vos armies in their defense against the Iron Hand. Now, he concentrates on protecting Yeninskiy's western provinces from the predations of the Raven. Oft-styled as brutal and savage even for a Vos war chief, Barak does what he must to keep the Raven's armies out of Yeninskiy. Recently, that has meant allying himself with Suvek the White (MV; Pr8, *Belinik*; Ba, *major*, 19), the new—and rather unusual—leader of the One True Church of Vosgaard in the region. Barak bears many signs of the One True Church's favor: at least five spell tattoos and many battle- and ritual-scars. It is thought that Barak himself crushed the emerging nona movement within his provinces. A traditionalist, Barak Wohlken upholds torva ways.

◆ **Lieutenant:** Neva Wohlken hardly shies from her brother's brutal manner and acts as his lieutenant in clan affairs. Still, she rules her own guild holdings in a much more relaxed manner. She actively trades precious ore for food and manufactured goods (mainly weapons) with the Torsk "clan" and has even opened negotiations with some of the Yousera Brotherhood. If Yeninskiy is ever to become a unified realm, Neva's efforts must succeed.

Lita Torsk has a Vos name and some Vos blood running in her veins, but she is a Khinasi through and through. This made her the natural leader of those Khinasi unwilling to flee Yeninskiy's provinces when the Iron Hand smashed through Merasaf. A warrior with the grace of a dancer, Lita took her father's place when he fell fighting the orogs and her "clan" hasn't regretted the succession.

Not all Lita Torsk's people share her Khinasi heritage. One out of every five can be called pure-blooded Vos. But Lita has proven an able leader, and those Vos not committed to the warrior Barak or the raiding Yousera Brotherhood have found homes on the plains of Btumi, Svesmail, and Urysk.

The Yousera Brotherhood rules the coast and, some say, the waters around the Yousera Peninsula. A loose band of cutthroats, raiders, and mercenaries, their "regent" is a three-cap-

tain council concerned more with plunder than with rulership of a realm.

Captain Kasimir ept-Amed (MV; T13; Az, *minor*, 15) disgraces his Khinasi surname with every step he takes. The most powerful of the ruling captains, he personally controls three of the Brotherhood's six ships (including the powerful zebec). Despised and feared by the Dragonsea Coster of Merasaf (his favorite prey), Kasimir has a price on his head in excess of 10,000 gp. But more than one rebellious crewman has tried to collect that gold; the sharks of Yousera Cape feed well when they do.

Some say Captain Dimas (MV; T5; Vo, *minor*, 12) isn't a pirate by choice but by necessity. Romantic tales of betrayal and lost loves follow the smooth-talking Dimas into every port. He has a reputation for mercy toward those who surrender to him peacefully, and his two longships have been known to engage in legitimate trading.

◆ **Lieutenants:** Captain Dimas' lieutenant, the half-elven Brigyte Coullah (FE; F6), serves her captain with almost slavish devotion, but no tale tells of any romantic connection between the two. Like Dimas, romantic stories surround Brigyte's past as well. One states how she wandered out of Cwmb Bheinn, broken and bleeding, a victim of "elven justice," only to stumble into the care of Dimas, then a soldier in Merasaf's army. The two, it is said, fled to sea when the Iron Hand invaded and have seldom been back since.

The third Raider of Yeninskiy lurks in the shadows of the other two. Captaining only one drakkar, the man known only as Ferask ("iron hand") brings his vessel into port only a few times every year. Ferask (M?; F15; ???) never appears in public without a mask disguising his features and seldom lingers anywhere for long. He does not concern himself with managing Yeninskiy, leaving its rulership to his partners. Why they do not cut him out of their shared regency is beyond anyone's knowledge, but most people secretly believe the other two captains fear Ferask more than anything else in the world.



**Description:** The rocky shores of eastern Yeninskiy do not invite ships to land there safely, and the high Atka Mountains to the northwest hardly make the trip to the Raven's domain seem worth the struggle. Only the provinces now known as the "Torsk Belt" benefit from the land's temperate climate, and many of its inhabitants fear a second invasion by the Iron Hand Tribes.

- ◆ **Capital:** Though well removed from the eastern coast, Vstaive benefits greatly from the Raiders of Yeninskiy. The Yousera Brotherhood owns an old Khinasi castle overlooking the inland city; there, the Council of Captains makes its decisions concerning its domains. The city itself teems with life. Vos, Khinasi, and mixed-breed humans live here, trading, stealing, and fighting along the way.
- ◆ **Sites:** The sheer cliffs of Stnerba offer no safe harbor for Yeninskiy's enemies, but it is well known that the three reaver captains of the Brotherhood hide their vessels along this coast in giant caves. Only visible at low tide, the entrances to these cliffside caverns are guarded 24 hours a day by the Captains' Guard. These elite troops patrol the caverns and secret passages that wind up into southern Stnerba, killing any interlopers they find.

**Allies:** The Raiders of Yeninskiy haven't made life easy for Merasaf's merchants, but too many of Merasaf's people share lineage with Yeninskiy's peasantry to allow for any kind of war. Cwmb Bheinn has made overtures of friendship toward Yeninskiy's Khinasi population, and may even begin courting the Wohlken Clan. Rovninodensk also favors the Wohlken Clan (as evidenced by the presence of trained varsks in Yeninskiy), but trade and communication around the Raven and the Manticore are difficult.

**Enemies:** The Raven took several provinces from Yeninskiy once, and recently tried to invade the realm over the Atka Mountains. The Iron Hand Tribes once cut Merasaf in two—it is unlikely that the orogs have given up. If the Yousera Brotherhood continues preying on every neutral realm, it could find itself without a homeland.

**Players' Secrets:** It should not come as a surprise that many secrets exist in a realm with so many regents.

#### Rumors

- ◆ Vore Lekiniskiy's name directly translates as "Master Fire Worm." Some say that the wizard of the Atka Mountains is merely a





man—but a man who mastered the great fire worm awoken by the Raven's invading army.

- ◆ For a captain or other officer of the Yousera Brotherhood, there are only two means of escape: death or disappearance, and the former happens far less than the latter. A recent tale around Vstaive insists that Captain Dimas is looking for a way to disappear from Yeninskiy with his share of the Brotherhood's gold, but the other two captains have made moves to stop him.
- ◆ Neva Wohlken's peacemaking may make her more popular among the people of the Torsk Belt, but there has been grumbling against her "un-Voslike activities" among the Wohlken warriors. Many openly wonder why they stand guard amid the Atka Mountains or in the dangerous Raven's Gap while she travels in relative safety through the Torsk Belt. This grumbling could turn into rebellion if Barak Wohlken does not act soon.
- ◆ Some say Neva Wohlken and Lita Torsk lead a secret nona faction seeking to reform the realm. Barak won't hear evil about Neva, however, and spares little of his time thinking about the Torsk provinces.

#### *For the Regent Only*

- ◆ A player character may assume the role of nearly any regent in the realm. However, if a PC steps into the Yousera Brotherhood, he should be aware that much of his time *must* be spent at sea. In order to collect "taxes" from their provinces and guild holdings, the captains must sail the seas looking for prey (or—ugh!—legitimate trade). To achieve average taxation and collection rolls, each captain must have all his ships at sea for at least two months in every three. If each captain sails with his ships, the taxation/guild collection rolls are made with a +1 modifier to the die roll. If no captain sails with his ships, these die rolls suffer a -1 penalty. Finally, if the ships do not sail, taxes/collections for the following domain turn will always result in the minimum GB result.
- ◆ If a player character assumes the leadership of the Wohlken Clan (Barak's regency), he learns that the Raven lost a high percentage of invasion forces to Vore Lekiniskiy's magics and his flame. A daring attack against Magdagrad, through Raven's Gap (Aral) could succeed, but only if performed almost immediately.



**B**ecause of Vosgaard's unique and divided nature, players should not be allowed to read all the information available on all the realms that exist within the heartless waste. Instead, heroes who begin as adventurers or kings in this land should be shown this section of players' information about Vosgaard. It contains distilled information on each of the "DM-only" areas of Vosgaard, including realms run by evil lords or awnshegh-lien, lands inhabited only by monsters, and barren wastes suitable for only the most desperate adventurer.

## npc realms

**F**ive NPC realms currently exist within Vosgaard. Each has the potential to grow into a rival for any land heroes might choose to support or run. While adventurers might make a profit within these realms—for, against, or despite their overlords—none should be considered safe havens for any would-be hero-king.

## lutkhovsky

Perhaps the "safest" of the NPC realms, this northern land remains a low risk only because of its sparse population. Nearly eighty percent of the realm's known, human inhabitants live within the bounds of Petropavinsk, the only city in Lutkhovsky. Some say goblins, driven out of the Orlenaskyy Mountains by the Sword Rust Tribes and the miners of Melyy, inhabit the western, forested provinces, but few humans venture into that dark land.

Recently, guilds in Petropavinsk and Rodin (in Melyy) have attempted to set up a trade route between the two realms with little success. During the winter, Petropavinsk's harbor closes for nearly six months, and the overland route, though short, is fraught with dangers.

## velenoye

Just south of the Orlenaskyy Mountains lies Velenoye, a realm in stark contrast with Lutkhovsky. The Grovnekevic Forest once covered this coastal land, but centuries ago, the Vos of Velenoye cut down or burned the trees

# the players' primer

in an effort to drive the elven population back over the mountains. They succeeded so completely that stories of the *gheallie Sidhe* and the faerie court of Tuar Annwn remain only in the most ancient legends.

Velenoye remains at war with its neighbors. Its troops continuously battle the Sword Rust Tribes for control of the southeastern foothills of the Orlenaskyy Mountains, and its raiders rival the Youser Brotherhood in their predations upon Vosgaard's eastern coast. The castle at Velensk, a keep made entirely of brown stone, constantly reminds the city's inhabitants of their tenuous grip on the realm.

Tsara Fiala Ruszca, regent of Velenoye, reportedly takes her cues from Lida Marnorin, high priestess of Kriesha and leader of the Temple of Might in Velenoye. While most of the realm accepts this, a few of the regent's tsarevos actively contest the temple's absolute power over the realm.

## molochev

One of the most well known and densely populated of all the Vos realms, Molochev hardly lets its southern location or fertile lands weaken its warlike resolve. Continuously at war with its Brecht and Khinasi-Vos neighbors in Berhagen and Kozlovnyy, Molochev has turned into the Vos equivalent of a police state. Suppressing his people's naturally chaotic tendencies, the Tsar Drago Koskov ("kingslayer" in corrupted low Brecht) has managed to turn Molochev into the launch point for a Vos invasion of Brechtür—if he can get a few more realms to go along. Meanwhile, he contents himself with the occasional raid over the eastern mountains and into Kozlovnyy, "the traitor realm."

According to popular rumor, Molochev's tsar is so desperate for power that he has taken on a "pet mage." Presumably a slave taken in a raid against Berhagen or Kozlovnyy, this wiz-



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## titles and rankings

The Vos do not use complicated noble titles. In the list below, if a difference exists between male and female titles, the male is listed first, the female second.

<i>Tsarevic</i>	"Overlord" or "overchieftain." In all of Vos history, only Basil Zariyatam could claim this title. <i>Equivalent:</i> "emperor."
<i>Tsar; Tsara</i>	"Lord, chief." Rulers of many clans use this designation. <i>Equivalent:</i> "king."
<i>Tsarevo; Tsareva</i>	"War chief." Leaders of clans or tribes usually take this designation. They gain it by leading their people into battle. <i>Equivalent:</i> "warlord, captain."
<i>Boyar; Boya</i>	"Robber baron." Semi-derogatory term for an unsanctioned war chief.
<i>Tsor; Tsora</i>	"Peace-chief, leader." Hardly a position of honor in a Vos tribe, this designation is rarely used. It indicates the Vos version of a peacetime leader whose function is political only.

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ard works for Drago in exchange for his life. This has started the people of Molochev grumbling, and many believe the land is ripe for rebellion. The tsar, however, has an uncanny knack for seeking out and eliminating dissidents.

## zoloscaya

A comparatively civilized realm, Zoloscaya seems protected by an unusual brand of good fortune. Its climate always seems much more moderate than that of its neighbors, and its people, though practically pure Vos, act much more civilized than most. Protected by a powerful coastal fleet, Zoloscaya may be one of the oldest Vos realms surviving today. Its tsora, Uvna Farzeb, maintains a cautious relationship with her inland neighbors and has fended off several attacks by both the Yousera Brotherhood and Velenoye's raiders. Many wonder how Zoloscaya pays for its constant good fortune and some, it is said, have tried to find out.

Strangely enough, few people travel in or out of Zoloscaya. Many traders and travelers stop at the port of Polovtsiya and come away amazed at the sights, but few actually pene-

trate inland or even up and down the welcoming coast. Most people simply believe there isn't much to see or do there.

## hjorig

Claimed by the Rjurik centuries ago, the long land of Hjorig sits high among the steppes and mountains of the Drachenaurs. Its jarl, Einar Kuppel, maintains a firm grip on his holdings in the land and has proved an able negotiator—at least with the gnolls of the Fell Kingdom. He tends to look toward Brechtür for his prey, but has occasionally made forays through the Mistmoor into Rovninodensk. He and the other rulers of Vosgaard seldom concern themselves with each other.

Still, Hjorig occupies a key spot in the northlands. Shielded by the Drachenaurs to the west and the mighty Grovnekevic Forest to the east, the realm enjoys a reasonable growing season. Unfortunately, the warlike jarls of Hjorig have never been much interested in agriculture or trade.

## the awnshegh realms

Surprisingly, only two major awnshegh-lien rule lands within Vosgaard. Perhaps the warlike Vos have proven to be too much for other awnshegh lords, or perhaps the Vos have simply been fortunate.

## the manticore

Once said to be a noble paladin of Avani, the Manticore now rules the small land just north of the Raven's domain and south of Velenoye. Powerful and secretive, the Manticore maintains but one adviser, the wizard Y'urre. Other lieutenants have come and gone, but only the wizard has proven faithful. It is said that the Raven covets the Manticore's lair but bides his time, respecting the former paladin's abilities as a warrior and as a monster.



Rumors of an uprising or civil war have come out of the Manticore's domain recently, but only further exploration into this volatile land can reveal the truth or falsehood of these tales.

## the raven

Though the Raven came to power only a century ago, he has forged a reputation to rival the Gorgon's in that comparatively short time. Many believe he has powers that make him an equal to that Anuirean awnshegh and more than a match for the Khinasi Magian.

Certainly, the Raven believes he deserves this respect. Calling himself the "son of Azrai," the Raven has made no bones about his desire to expand his realm. He has been foiled in his attempts to take over Yeninskiy only by luck and guile, and many expect him to try again soon. Still, even the Raven must look over his shoulder sometimes, and when he looks, he sees the powerful Manticore and the mysterious realm of Zoloskaya. He intends to push both into the sea eventually, but even an awnshegh must plan his moves carefully.

## the humanoid realms

**M**ore than any other region, Vosgaard remains subject to the predations of large numbers of humanoids. No fewer than three humanoid realms exist within Vosgaard, and there may actually be more. Each has its own history and power, and all pose a threat to any future the Vos might have as a united people.

### kal kalathor

One of the oldest of all the humanoid realms of Cerilia, Kal Kalathor may have existed since before the days of the great elven empires. Certainly, when goblins bent to their elven masters, Kal Kalathor went along. But, when the elven rule of Cerilia crumbled, Kal Kalathor survived the tumultuous Humanoid Wars and grew, both above ground and below, until it became the stronghold it is today.

Like the dwarven realms of Cerilia, much of Kal Kalathor exists beneath the surface. Great caverns and tunnels weave labyrinthine patterns beneath the marshy surface of the goblin realm, and though most of Kal-Murthan, the

Goblin City, can be seen on the surface of the land, much of it lies below.

The goblins of Kal Kalathor are not nearly as civilized as those in the west of Cerilia. Certainly, the Kal Kalathor goblins trade with their neighbors on occasion. It is rumored that Kal Kalathor and Molochev even share a permissive alliance. However, the goblins of Kal Kalathor remain as savage and brutal as their Vos neighbors—as they must to survive. Humans who venture into the goblin realm do so at their peril.

## the gnoll fells

Also known as the Fell Kingdom, the Gnoll Fells got its name, not surprisingly, from its humanoid population and its broken, tree-covered landscape. The only known gnoll realm, it continually tries to expand its borders and its influence at the expense of its neighbors. Quite recently, Ghus Feuerscorn (leader of the gnolls' temple to Yeenoghu) managed to set up a small string of holdings in nearby Hjorig and as far away as Grevesmühl in an effort to supplant the human population. The gnolls have tried, unsuccessfully, to expand into Drachenward and have reportedly fought numerous wars with the elves of Tuar Annwn.

## sword rust tribes

The most dangerous of Cerilia's humanoids, it is a wonder that more orog realms do not exist throughout the land. Often, it seems, orogs see no purpose in banding together to fight for a unified realm. Instead, individuals among their race dominate lesser humanoids and attempt to forge kingdoms on their own. Eventually, these orogs fall victim to their own plots or the efforts of those around them, but they seldom make more than a bloody mark on history.

Except, it seems, in Vosgaard. The orogs of the Sword Rust Tribes have goblin and human slaves but the population is still primarily orog. Perhaps the fearsome nature of the Vos themselves provided enough of a threat for the orogs to forge a nation, or perhaps this is just an isolated occurrence. Whatever the case, these mountain orogs managed to drive Vos warriors down out of "their" mountains, and they continue to rule three provinces despite the best efforts of one of the more militaristic Vos realms. Their leader, it is said, is a huge half-orog, half-troll with a powerful, stolen bloodline.



## the wild lands

**M**any "realms" of Vosgaard remain unfettered by rulership or uncatalogued by the adventurous. A few migratory tribes live virtually leaderless in these Wild Lands among some of Cerilia's most dangerous monsters. It might be possible for a truly brave and foolhardy scion to carve his own kingdom from the Wild Lands, but no one expects this to happen any time soon.

## the icemarch

Covered by the eastern reaches of the great Klessberg glacier, the northern provinces of the Icemarch know no summertime. When the Leviathan's Reach becomes choked with ice floes in the winter, one would think a traveler could walk from the frost-covered realm to Torova Temylatin. But anyone who walks the Icemarch in the winter has more to concern himself with than the northernmost land mass of Cerilia.

Always cold, always frozen, some say the Icemarch came under a terrible curse before humans ever came to Cerilia. Even Drachenward, which lies farther to the north, has a better cli-

mate than the Icemarch. The realm's forests remain covered with snow and ice year 'round.

Yet people do live in the Icemarch. Nomadic Vos, even more barbaric than their southern brethren, haunt this frozen waste, searching for food and shelter in a war against nature that lasts all year. They compete with ice goblins and fell beasts for survival, and even the most battle-hardened southern Vos give them a wide berth.

One city supposedly exists in the Icemarch: the fabled Timoshev. Built, it is said, completely out of enchanted ice and carved from the eastern edge of the Klessberg glacier, "Ice Tower" (as the name translates) houses beasts accustomed to living on the frozen lands. It is said a powerful wizard rules and maintains the frozen city, but no reliable sources can be found to confirm (or deny) this legend.

## the battle fens

Long before the rise of the Sword Rust Tribes, the Vos realm of Velenoye prospered and its population swelled. During this time, the Velenoye Vos burned or cut down the forests that covered their realm (as is told elsewhere) and they crossed the mountains in pursuit of their enemies—the elves.





Eager to lead their enemies away from their homeland, the armies of Tuar Annwn marched north toward the Leviathan's reach, and only turned to face their human foes when they reached the coast. Battle was joined, and the Vos began to push the elves into the sea.

All seemed lost for the elven armies. One by one, their leaders fell and their magic failed. Still, they had saved their realm; the Vos believed, at that time, the elves came from the sea and sought to drive them back into it. Resigned to their fate, the elven armies battled in an effort to take as many Vos with them as they could.

But just when the battle seemed over, help came from an unexpected quarter. The few Vos who survived the battle and escaped south or east into neighboring lands told of shadowy monsters, raging out of the Grovnekevic Forest and assaulting them from the rear. Darkling hounds and many-limbed monsters struck first, followed by creatures even the hardest survivors could not describe. "Teeth and claws in darkness" was all they could say.

Since that day, no Vos has willingly traveled to the land of Velenoye's defeat. Tales of haunted marches and frozen battlefields live on in the memories of the Vos and none will ever assault the elven realm of Tuar Annwn over the Battle Fens again.

## the mistmoor

With nearly as storied a history as the Battle Fens, the Mistmoor has been the site of more noted battles than any other land in Vosgaard, and not once has an army fought over the land itself. Known to be haunted by roving spirits and possessed beasts, many Vos believe the spirit of Azrai stopped among the moors on its way to its last resting place in the Shadow World. Some say part of his essence still lives amidst the fog-covered realm.

True or not, Vos and even Brecht armies have marched and fought over the Mistmoor many times. Magic seems to have greater power there, and though the land appears to be uninhabited, rumors tell of strange creatures—perhaps some unnamed awnshegh-lien—that hold influence in the land.

## tuar annwn

According to the elves of Cwmb Bheinn, Tuar Annwn translates loosely as "Land of the Dead." Brave in battle and fueled with an almost inhuman vitality, the men and women of northern Vosgaard quake with fear at the thought of walking within the bounds of this savage, elven realm. Even other elves of the north find reasons not to explore the dark heart of the Grovnekevic Forest—the elves of Cwmb Bheinn included. It is said that a few foolhardy humans have wandered into Tuar Annwn and come out alive, having seen nothing of elves or their dwellings, but still more have simply disappeared, never to be seen again.

Once during an unusually warm summer, a band of Vos raiders attempted to sail south from the Leviathan's Reach to Rovninodensk using the Annwnalach ("river of death"). Their three longships of heavily-armed Vos passed untouched through the Gnoll Fells and into Tuar Annwn. Two months later, their last four warriors, on foot, entered Rovninodensk. Of the four, three were mad and the fourth, while sane, seemed to have aged nearly forty years. He died before he could tell more of what must have been an incredible tale.

**Special Note:** Few Vos believe Tuar Annwn to be a leaderless, "wild" realm, and rumors of an evil faerie court hidden deep within the Grovnekevic Forest have circulated throughout Vosgaard. It is quite possible that Tuar Annwn's elves live in a civilized, peaceful realm, but one that does not permit visitors of any kind. Even elves from other realms are not welcome here.

## torova temylatin

Most maps of northern Cerilia include the island of Torova Temylatin, but few go into any detail. Sea captains put in there for fresh water and supplies or sail around the northern harbors to avoid the treacherous Leviathan's Reach in winter, but none ever stay there. Its eastern and western tips seem to be covered with ice during the entire year, but a large forest and high mountains can be seen along the interior. A few particularly adventurous explorers have sailed up the central river of the island, but none have penetrated inland to explore the land itself. If any inhabitants live on the island, they have not been seen or reported.





# tribes of the heartless wastes

## DM's guidebook

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Last land.  
Running eastward, northward, outward,  
Toward the Frozen Shadow.  
Lost land.  
Driven forward, upward, iceward,  
No more in the warming light.  
Our land.  
Striking backward, downward, all-ward,  
We flee no more forever.  
—Ancient Vos War Chant

As the war cries of the Vos ring out over the frozen landscape of Cerilia's most frigid land, the tribes of the heartless wastes strive for dominance among the races of Cerilia. No longer content to live only among the wastelands of Vosgaard as a fragmented people, the warriors of Vosgaard desire a return to former glory.

If only they can find the right leader.

Within the heartless wastes, some *hero*—may become the leader the Vos seek. A hero could arise among the Vos or perhaps come from outside to rule them. To the Vos, it does not truly matter; the strong survive, but the strongest rule. The Vos want to become the terror of the

# introduction

world again; they need only to be shown how. This campaign expansion reveals the last unexplored reaches of Cerilia, plus a new look at the continent from the Vos perspective.

## presentation

As described in the *Players' Chronicle*, this campaign expansion, the last in the Cerilian series, is unlike any other. In *Ruins of Empire*, *Cities of the Sun*, *The Rjurik Highlands*, and *Havens of the Great Bay*, players had the upper hand. They could read the descriptions of the various domains and choose from virtually any of them, becoming a regent or "hero-king" instantly. This won't work in Vosgaard.

The *Players' Chronicle* presents four realms appropriate for player characters

(PCs) or heroes, including some invisible domains (law, guild, temple, and source holdings). They have been detailed carefully, but compared to the material presented in other campaign expansions, they are limited. Vosgaard is not a place where players can pick and choose.

## using this guide

This book presents the realms of Vosgaard for the Dungeon Master's (DM's) use. None of the realms included here are recommended for hero use. Unless the DM has a specific reason, no hero should begin a Vos campaign as the ruler of any realm or domain detailed in this booklet.

## part I: the npc realms

The non-player character (NPC) realms are presented in much the same way as those detailed in the *Players' Chronicle*, with the addition of a "DM's Secrets" section. These NPC realms should be used in the same way as other "Not recommended for PC use" realms in other expansions. Designed as the hero-kings' main political adversaries or allies, these realms can be used to instigate (or react to) diplomacy, trade, and other domain actions. They respond to the PCs' domain actions with actions of their own, and they will vie with the prospective hero-king for power and influence. They will be the hero-king's most familiar enemies, rivals, and allies.

Every NPC realm description contains secrets only hinted at in the *Players' Chronicle*. For instance, most character statistics (sex, race, class, level, bloodline, and alignment of nonplayer characters) found in the *DM's Guidebook* are complete, while stats for the same character in the *Players' Chronicle* are not. The DM should read both books, treating the information found in this book as true when contradicted by information in the *Players' Chronicle*. This rule holds for all areas described in this book, not just the NPC realms.

## part II: nonhuman and awnshegh realms

This section describes realms slated *only* for the DM's use—these realms are designed for adventure and conquest rather than intrigue



## dm's secrets of vosgaard

In place of the rumors, rules, and news presented in each realm description of the *Players' Chronicle*, this text provides "DM's Secrets." These secrets may be rules needed to properly run the realm, but in most cases, they are suggestions for adventure hooks that could make using the realm in a Vos campaign much more interesting.

However, just because these DM's secrets are intended for the DM does *not* mean they have to be true. They are *suggested* story threads proposed to spice up your campaign. Some of them will contradict others, and a few may not fit the scope of your individual campaign. Read them and use them as you see fit, but do not be afraid to ignore them.

## part iv: new rules for a new land

Vosgaard requires some new rules for any DM and players considering adventures here. Information on spell tattoos, weather rules, and more can be found in the final section of this book. All rules presented in this section should be carefully considered by the DM before introducing them; as long as the BIRTHRIGHT basic rules are followed, the DM may not consider these new systems necessary to the existing campaign. These rules have been designed to enhance any Vos campaign and should interest both players and DMs.

## vosgaard: land of adventure

Depending on the style of the DM's BIRTHRIGHT campaign, he may wish to delay regency among his players when they begin adventuring in Vosgaard. The Vos, more than any other race, follow leaders who prove themselves over and over, even before they earn kinglike status. Bloodlines carry only so much weight among the Vos—a weak character, no matter how strong her bloodline, will never successfully rule in Vosgaard for more than a few months at best. Adventurers who build reputations as heroes can earn responsibility and rewards from the Vos even if they come from other areas of Cerilia.

This fact makes Vosgaard, strangely enough, one of the more egalitarian societies in Cerilia. Certainly, the Vos dislike and mistrust non-Vos adventurers out of hand, but they aren't known for accepting each other, either. A character who comes from the wrong Vos realm, tribe, or even family may end up fighting against the same or worse prejudice as Anuireans, Khinasi, Brechts, or Rjurik. If a hero comes to Vosgaard, survives its tests, and proves himself capable, he can win leadership among the stubborn, brutal, superstitious Vos. Then his only challenge is to keep it.

and political maneuvering. Because of the different purposes served by these realms, the format of Part II differs somewhat from Part I and the realms presented in the *Players' Chronicle*. The descriptions outline strengths and weaknesses of the realms, suggestions for using the lands in a Vos campaign, and game mechanics and shortcuts the DM may wish to adopt to better use these domains.

## part iii: the wild lands

Untamed and largely unsettled, the Wild Lands of Vosgaard will be conquered only through extensive adventures and heroic endeavors. These lands harbor creatures and dangers that naturally oppose settlement. Attempts to create a law holding in the Mistmoor or rule a province in the Battle Fens are doomed to failure unless a would-be regent engages in significant preparation. If a hero or a heroking wants to claim the untamed lands of Vosgaard, he will have to work extra hard just to have the slimmest of chances.

These lands should provide the most interesting and dangerous adventure sites in the heartless wastes. Few novice characters should spend a lot of time in the Wild Lands, but heroes can gain support in the more settled neighboring lands by successfully adventuring in these regions. The Vos respond well to desperate heroics, and adventurers can become heroes quickly when they brave the impossible.





# molochev

**Alignment:** Lawful evil.

**Provinces/Holdings:** To most of Cerilia, Molochev represents Vosgaard. The land may be warmer than many Brecht realms, but its tsar epitomizes the cruel brutality most other human races take for granted in the Vos. He controls his provinces and holdings tightly with considerable aid from the One True Church of Vosgaard and his own secret source holdings.

## part I: npc realms

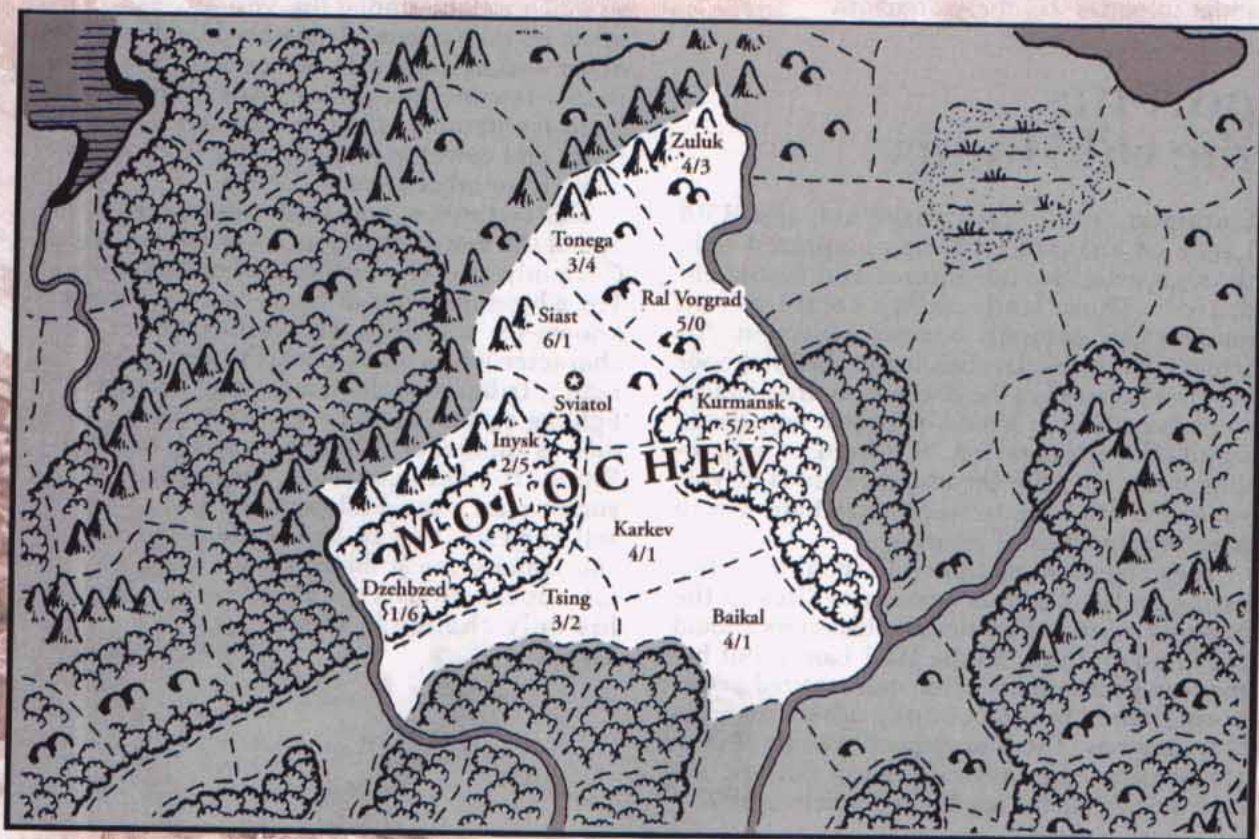
- ♦ **Law:** Tsar Drago Koskov ("Kingslayer," in low Brecht) (MV; F5/W2; Vo, major, 26; CE) considers ruling Molochev his privilege, honor, and duty. He prizes power and control, and scorns those who try to rule without full measures of both. It infuriates him that one of Kal Kalathor's goblin tribes has established law holdings in a few of his eastern provinces.

- ♦ **Temples:** Spurning the "sibling relationship" of Belinik and Kriesha, the One True Church of Vosgaard is strongly represented in Molochev. The strength of its temples would be greater, however, if Sugat Tsorich (MV; Pr5, Belinik; Ma, minor, 19; CE) weren't so content to enjoy his regency. If he paid the slightest attention to activity in the realm, he might notice temples to Lana springing up.

- ♦ **Guilds:** An ironic name for a slave guild, the Tribute of Kings has functioned in Molochev for nearly four generations. Slave gatherers and traders to Vosgaard, the Molochev Slavers (as they are more commonly called) are headed by a new regent: Ches-

sa of Vorgrad (FV; T6; Ma, tainted, 12; NE). Fresh from the Molochev/Kal Kalathor skirmishes, she ascended to the regency by proving more than able to tame goblin and hobgoblin slaves for human masters.

- ♦ **Sources:** Eager to increase his personal power, Tsar Drago forced a captured Khinasi wizard to teach him wizardry; unfortunately for everyone, the tsar proved an apt





Province	Law	Temples	Guilds	Sources
Baikal (4/1)	DK (3) LL (1)	TCV (2) -	ToK (2) -	DK (0) -
Dzhebzdz (1/6)	-	LL (1)	-	DK (3)
Inysk (2/5)	DK (2)	TCV (1)	ToK (1)	DK (2)
Karkev (4/1)	DK (4)	TCV (2)	ToK (3)	DK (0)
Kurmansk (5/2)	DK (2) KK (3)	-	ToK (1)	DK (0) -
Ral Vorgrad (5/0)	DK (3) KK (1)	TCV (1) -	ToK (3) -	DK (0) -
Siaist (6/1)	DK (6)	TCV (4)	ToK (4)	DK (1)
Tsing (3/2)	DK (1) LL (0)	TCV (1) -	-	DK (0) -
Tonega (3/4)	DK (1)	LL (2)	-	DK (2)
Zuluk (4/3)	DK (1) KK (1)	LL (2) -	ToK (1) -	DK (0) -

**Abbreviations:** DK=Drago Koskov (Tsar of Molochev); TCV=One True Church of Vosgaard; KK=Kal Kalathor (goblins); LL=Lana's Light (Katherine ab-Sina); ToK=Tribute of Kings (Molochev Slavers)

student. Whether Drago killed his teacher or still holds him in prison is unknown (DM's option), but the now dual-classed tsar has begun weaving a web of ley lines and sources throughout his realm and appears eager to test their power.

- ◆ **Provinces:** Tsar Drago rules every province in Molochev except Kurmansk. Taken by the goblins of Kal Kalathor only a few months ago, it remains under the control of their Great Khanate.

**Regency Generated/Accumulated:** 63/34 RP. The actual number of points usable by the tsar is much lower (26), due to his bloodline score.

**Treasury:** 38 GB. The fabled treasury of Molochev contains many magical items of honor including the *horned helm of terror*, the traditional battle-helm of Molochev's ruler. While the exact powers of the helm are unclear, it is, by all accounts, a fearsome artifact.

**Army/Navy:** Despite its aggressions, Molochev maintains a comparatively moderate garrison for its size, including the following troops:

- ◆ 1 unit of varsk riders (used only in winter campaigns)
- ◆ 3 units of Molochev Sarveklos (Vos knights)
- ◆ 2 units of elite infantry
- ◆ 2 units of pikes
- ◆ 1 unit of scouts

**Regent:** While Tsar Drago presents himself as the epitome of Vos regency, he secretly spits upon traditional Vos values. Concerned only with personal and political power, the Tsar of Molochev will sink to any depths to further his own interests. He will break any treaty or betray any cause if he feels he can gain advantage.

Unfortunately for the tsar's enemies, however, managing deceit has always been Drago's strength. As a proud, young warrior and apparent heir to the throne of Molochev, he used treachery, poisons, and evil magic to eliminate any possible rivals for the realm's regency, then killed the old regent to hasten his own ascension. No one survives to tell the tale but the tsar himself, but Drago was so paranoid about not inheriting the realm that he forced a priest of Belinik to perform the rite of investiture upon him in secret before the former tsar died.

This paranoia could be the tsar's greatest weakness. He saw to the removal of the former regent of the One True Church in Molochev, then installed a puppet. As a result, Sugat Tsoirich throws the support of the One True Church behind all the tsar's actions, but the church is much weaker than in recent years.

Drago desires to be named Tsarevic of Vosgaard. A lofty goal and a dangerous one, Molochev's regent may achieve it.

- ◆ **Lieutenants:** Over the past few years, Molochev has had several lieutenants—all of whom have come to bad ends. It seems the tsar desires a capable second-in-command as well as an heir, but his paranoia keeps him from trusting anyone for too long. The most recent lieutenant, a female Vos warrior named Kara Daincser ("the dancer" to her troops), disappeared fighting the goblins of Kurmansk. Already rumors are circulating: Some say the Dancer was killed by her own troops. If this is so, they may have been acting on orders from the tsar himself.

**Important NPCs:** An embarrassment to the One True Church of Vosgaard, Sugat Tsoirich, High Priest of Belinik, still wields considerable power within the realm—as long as he does not cross the tsar. Fat and old, Sugat prospered in the Church before the tsar's tampering only because of his connections to Molochev's tsarevos and boyars. By luck of birth and marriage, he is related to nearly three-quarters of Molochev's most prominent warriors. The One True Church took Sugat on to keep him from being killed in battles against the Brechts, the elves of Innishiere, and the goblins.





It would not be fair, however, to accuse Sugat of incompetency. No one rises to such levels in the One True Church without developing significant survival skills. Sugat seems to be a decadent, less ambitious version of Tsar Drago in some ways—ruthless and cruel, but less eager to advance himself. If not for the tsar's intervention, Sugat probably would have been content to remain an obscure priest of Belinik.

Rumors have begun to hurt Sugat's position, however. While Belinik has nothing against cruelty, he prefers it on the battlefield and in action. If the High Priest has ever fought in a battle, it has not been recorded. Also, Sugat has been known to provide spell tattoos to any warriors willing to pay his price. This goes against all Vos codes of war, and the priests of Molochev will not stand for it unless Sugat does something drastic to reinforce his position.

Chessa of Vorgrad served in the tsar's scout troops for most of her adolescent years and has seen extensive action against the Brechts of Berhagen and Rheulgard as well as the goblins of Kal Kalathor. She even survived a disastrous raid into Innishiere two years ago and seems favored by Belinik. It is strange, then, that she has chosen the life of a thief over a warrior.

Beautiful by Vos and even conventional human standards, Chessa has a wide, dark face and long, braided black hair streaked with silver. Young and hale, she fights with abandon when forced into combat but has no compunctions against ambushes and secret attacks. She proved so competent as a scout that the Tribute of Kings guild recruited her to lead small slave-capturing expeditions into neighboring realms. Her success and daring won her notoriety in the guild and, eventually, the regency. Of all the current regents of Molochev, she is the only one to win her position by outright achievement.

Currently, Chessa is one of the few people in Molochev who suspects the tsar's true nature. She keeps herself as far away from Drago as she can, knowing that he would be impressed by her abilities and, within a few months, fearful of them. Chessa does not desire to "disappear" as so many of the tsar's enemies have in the past. She hopes to use the Molochev Slavers guild to earn as much money as she can before she is forced to move on.

Katherine ab-Sina (FV/Kh; Pr6, Lana; An, great, 44; LG) uses her modest powers to hide her temple from both the One True Church of Vosgaard and the Tsar of Molochev. A half-Khinasi, half-Vos woman of middle years, she carries a secret that Drago would kill to know: Her father was the former regent of Molochev.



and her mother was a captured noble of Khourane. Her bloodline, a mingling of two great lines, would be enough to overcome Drago's claims to regency if she could win support.

But Katherine is a devout follower of Avani, as was her mother. She escaped the burning of the old capital city (see "Sites," below) but refused to flee Molochev. Instead, she succors those few Vos brave enough to reject the tsar and the One True Church.

**Description:** Fertile and green most of the year, Molochev feels like a wild land to visitors. Few large farms exist even in the south. Most peasants work on small claims similar to those in feudal Anuirean lands. Reavers employed by the tsar or his war chiefs periodically pillage their own provinces when wars against Molochev's raiders do not go well; fear of these raiders keeps the peasants firmly in line.

- ◆ **Capital:** Sviatol became the new capital of Molochev ten years ago when Kzorus, the old capital, was burned to the ground by Drago's forces. Officially, the tsar suppressed a rebellion in Kzorus with the burning. Unofficially, the slaughter removed his last two blood rivals for Molochev's throne. Sviatol, once a simple keep, has been expanded into a fortified city over the years. Intended as a monument to Molochev's tsar, its gray stone buildings and high walls certainly project a stern image to the peasantry.
- ◆ **Sites:** The temples to Lana's Light in Tonega and Zuluk provide some refuge from the tsar's rule within Molochev. A haven for the emerging nona faction in the realm, this group fears attention from both the One True Church and the tsar.

**Allies:** While Molochev has no allies, Drago has sent emissaries to the Raven requesting his aid in attacking the great Khanate of Kal Kalathor. He has received no response yet.

**Enemies:** Every realm that borders Molochev is its enemy. Fortunately, none (except Rheulgard and Berhagen) will support the others in any attack on the Vos kingdom. Kal Kalathor, currently one of Molochev's most aggressive enemies, could actually become its ally if Drago would only talk to the Khanate's ambassadors instead of killing them out of hand. The goblin kingdom has a history of negotiating with Molochev's former regents and with the people of Rovninodensk.

**DM's Secrets:** In a realm as tightly controlled as Molochev, rumors can quickly escalate to accusations of treason.

- ◆ The Dancer (FV; F7; LN) survived the tsar's assassination attempt but was gravely wounded. Somehow, while traveling from Kurmansk through Baikal and Tsing and into Zuluk, she received aid from the Temple of Lana's Light. The Dancer has learned of the tsar's blasphemous wizardly powers but cannot reveal him without significant support. She feels she cannot approach the One True Church of Vosgaard with the news since they would want to destroy the temple that aided her in her distress. She waits and recovers, hoping for other options.
- ◆ Its aid to the Dancer is not the only secret harbored by Lana's Light. Katherine ab-Sina, the High Priest, has a son who is nearing adulthood. Named after the former Tsar of Molochev, Gregor ab-Sina (MV; P1; An, great, 22; LG) longs for the day when he can avenge his grandfather's murder and bring Molochev into Lana's Light. Katherine has hidden the youth for nearly ten years and will not let him rush his desires. She hopes for suitable companions to arise among the nona Vos. If necessary, she will send Gregor south to his distant relatives in Khourane while the boy works to improve his skills.
- ◆ Fed up with the obvious degeneration of their temple, priests of the One True Church of Vosgaard plan to overthrow their fat, cowardly (as they see him) High Priest. Sugat knows nothing of the plot, but word has reached Tsar Drago. Fearful of losing his puppet-priest but amused by the unfolding scenario, the tsar has kept himself informed of the progress of the plot but has made no move to stop it so far. It is possible that Tsar Drago, caught up in his own plans and his secret magical studies, may let the plot go far enough that surprise "aid" could cause it to succeed. Fortunately for him, no unexpected factors could possibly interfere in Molochev's internal politics . . .



# Lutkhovsky

**Alignment:** Neutral.

**Provinces/Holdings:** Split among the Surzek Goblins and the small Vos population, the provinces and holdings of Lutkhovsky do not even approach their potential—and perhaps never will. But with the silver mines of Melyy booming to the south, adventuresome settlers have begun to swell the human population.

Refer to the map on page 13.

- ◆ **Law:** Pavel Suderaght (MV; T7; Ma, minor, 15; LN) established some semblance of law in the human provinces of Lutkhovsky only in response to the recent influx of immigrants. The Surzek Goblins, led by chieftain Sorid Vorskrider (MG; F5; Br, major, 34; LE), lay claim to most of the western territories.
- ◆ **Temples:** The Devastation of Maglubiyet controls the Lutkhovsky goblins in a manner that would do the war-priests of Belinik proud. The small temple to Lirovka, goddess of trade, looks out for the welfare of Lutkhovsky's human population.
- ◆ **Guilds:** The Petropavinsk Woodhewers have been cutting and shipping lumber south, but the goblins of the eastern Grovnekevic Forest have not allowed them to set up a permanent trade route—yet.
- ◆ **Sources:** Few magic practitioners exist within this wild realm, but that could change with the recent encroachment by Firosk Sleektra (FE; W17; An, great, 35; CN).
- ◆ **Provinces:** Not surprisingly, only a few of Lutkhovsky's provinces are ruled. Pavel Suderaght rules Petnoi and Pavisk, while the Surzek Goblins rule Zzyk, Batukhan, and Gortz. The Sword Rust Tribes may attempt to claim Minisk at any time.

**Regency Generated/Accumulated:** 15/12 RP (Pavel Suderaght); 15/5 RP (Sorid Vorskrider).

**Treasury:** Unfortunately for the Petropavinsk Woodhewers, their attempts at trade have failed, resulting in little money. If Pavel has more than 3 GB in his treasury at any time, it would surprise everyone. The Surzek Goblins may have a large treasury of 15 GB or more, but if so, it is carefully hidden.

Province	Law	Temples	Guilds	Sources
Aykun (0/8)	—	—	PW (0)	—
Batukhan (2/7)	SV (1)	DoM (2)	—	FS (1)
Gortz (3/6)	SV (1)	DoM (2)	—	FS (5)
	SR (0)	—	—	—
Kolinau (1/8)	—	—	PW (1)	—
Lorka (2/7)	SR (1)	—	DoM (0)	—
Minisk (3/6)	SV (2)	DoM (2)	—	—
Pavisk (2/7)	PW (1)	ToS (2)	PW (2)	—
Petnoi (4/5)	PW (2)	ToS (3)	PW (4)	—
Shauz (0/7)	—	—	—	—
Tzubinstak (1/8)	SV (1)	DoM (1)	PW (1)	—
Zzyk (4/5)	SV (2)	DoM (4)	—	—

**Abbreviations:** PW=Petropavinsk Woodhewers (Pavel Suderaght); SV=Surid Vorskrider (Surzek Goblins); DoM=Devastation of Maglubiyet (the Doom); FS=Firosk Sleektra ("Fell Speaker"); SR=Sword Rust Tribes (Tolz-inkur); ToS=Temple of Sirova

**Army/Navy:** Pavel Suderaght has no standing army. Each of his provinces, however, could muster one Vos levy (no cost of time or money) in response to any attack.

The Surzek Goblins have the following troops:

- ◆ 2 units of Surzek Wolfriders (goblin cavalry)
- ◆ 2 units of Surzek Infantry (goblin infantry)

**Regent:** No single regent rules Lutkhovsky and, as is becoming increasingly apparent, no regent wants to. Pavel Suderaght came to Lutkhovsky a few months ago at the behest of Jana Kuruven (FV; T8; Ma, minor, 14, LN) of Melyy, guildmaster of the Hook River miners and traders. Since arriving, he has had nothing but trouble with the Surzek Goblins (who were uninterested in the eastern provinces of Lutkhovsky until the humans arrived) and with those men and women willing to come north and work in his logging camps. Add to this the foul weather Lutkhovsky is famous for, and the result is a very reluctant regent.

Still, Pavel does his job. He cuts lumber and sells it in the south (mostly to Melyy), weather permitting. He hasn't managed to set up a year-round trade route between Petropavinsk and any other city (its bay freezes solid in winter, making shipping impossible), but Pavel refuses to give up.



**Important NPCs:** Sorid Vorskrider rules the Surzek goblins of Grovnekevic Forest with a ferocity matched only by his Vos neighbors. Sorid needs this ferocity—even as the Vos are more terrible than any other human race on Cerilia, the Surzek goblins put other goblin-kind to shame with their strength and cunning. Hardened by the frozen forest of Lutkhovsky and continuous wars with the Vos, orogs, elves, and other terrible creatures, the Surzek Goblins hold their part of the realm through sheer stubborn will.

Sorid is one of the last of the Surzek Goblins to survive separation from the Sword Rust Tribes. Orog of the Orlenaskyy Mountains once subjugated the goblins, hobgoblins, and other humanoids of the mountains, but Sorid and others rebelled, fighting to supplant their orog masters and later, when that failed, to flee the Orlenaskyy. They escaped the mountains, crossed the river, and now live in the pine forests of the western realm.

Sorid is backed—or directed—by Thurag Blackscale (*MG; Pr6, Maglubiyet; Az, minor, 19*), high priest of Maglubiyet and leader of the Doom (the temple known as the Devastation of Maglubiyet). The Doom rallied the goblins when they fought against the Sword Rust Tribes, and Thurag helped Sorid keep the goblin clans together when they abandoned their mountain homes. Now Thurag, his awn-shegh blood showing (he got his surname from black, hard scales growing on his chest, arms, and legs), commands respect and fear among the Surzek goblins.

**Description:** Covered by the ancient Grovnekevic Forest and the superstitions that have always surrounded that wood, Lutkhovsky has never been more than a haven for bandits and humanoids—until now. Cold and snowbound for nearly ten months of the year, its shores provide few safe harbors for visitors. Even its capital city, built in the hopes of attracting settlers willing to carve a realm out of this wild land, remains sealed off from sea traffic for more than half the year.

◆ **Capital:** Petropavinsk can hardly be called a city. An enlarged lumber camp with a few fisheries would be a more accurate description. Still, the city bustles with activity a few months of the year as loggers come into town with their heavy loads of harvested pine and traders from the southlands come to deal.

◆ **Sites:** Within the province of Zzyk lies the Surzek Goblin capital and the underground temple of Maglubiyet. A few brave Vos scouts once found the place and came back disturbed by what they saw. It is said that

the Surzek Goblins are not like others of their race—they cannot be bargained with or intimidated like normal goblins, and they resort to cannibalism (or the consumption of other humanoids) during the winter months.

**Allies:** Lutkhovsky has no real allies, though Melyy's Hook River Guild might provide financial support in a pinch.

**Enemies:** Lutkhovsky is its own worst enemy. If the Surzek Goblins ever attack the loggers, an all-out civil war could start. Fortunately, the goblins know that such excitement could entice the Sword Rust Tribes down out of their mountain holds in the hope of retrieving their errant slaves.

**DM's Secrets:** Wild and untamed, Lutkhovsky presents many opportunities for the daring hero.

◆ Thurag, high priest of the Doom, appears eager to start a fight with the Lutkhovsky Vos. His motivations seem unclear, but he may simply want to give his goblin followers something to do—busy hands are not rebellious hands. Sorid currently opposes an outright attack on the Vos timbermen, but he cannot forestall Thurag for long. It is entirely possible that Sorid, hoping to undermine Thurag's influence in "his" realm, will warn the Lutkhovsky lumberers in time to withstand an assault, but only if he can find someone willing to run messages between Surzek and Vos territories.

◆ A band of adventurers recently penetrated deep into Surzek territory in an effort to locate and steal the Surzek treasury. Fortunately for the human population of Lutkhovsky, they did not succeed. Unfortunately, several adventurers died in the effort, yielding several fairly powerful magical items to the goblin tribe. It is only a matter of time before the goblins figure out how to use these magical items, and perhaps turn them against the rest of the realm.





# velenoye

**Alignment:** Chaotic evil.

**Provinces/Holdings:** Nearly devoid of vegetation and wildlife, Velenoye's provinces and holdings undergo drastic changes of fortune depending on how well or how badly its warriors fare against the Sword Rust Tribes and the dreaded Firosk Slecktra. In recent years, Velenoye has made inroads against the former, but has fallen victim to the latter.

*Refer to the map on page 13.*

- ◆ **Law:** The Tsara of Velenoye, Fiala Ruszca (FV; F7; Ba, minor, 16; NE), controls the law that exists within the realm through her tsarevos and boyars.
- ◆ **Temples:** Velenoye's Temple of Might, one of the most influential in Vosgaard, is headed by the Winter Witch Lida Marnorin (FV; Pr10, Kriesba; Az, minor, 16; LE). She controls nearly all the temple holdings in the land and has begun expanding beyond the realm's borders.
- ◆ **Guilds:** By order of the Temple of Might, no guilds based within Velenoye may trade with any other realm. This hardly bothers the Raiders of Velenoye, headed by the pirate Nikoli (MV; T8; Az, tainted, 7; CE). This edict does impose some restrictions on Viktor Kesskin (MV; T4; An, minor, 19; N), however, who seeks to improve his herd's breeding stock.
- ◆ **Sources:** An enemy of Velenoye (and most Vos), Firosk Slecktra (FE; W17; An, great, 35; CN) holds the sources along the northern border of Velenoye. She seems to punish both Velenoye and the Sword Rust Tribes equally with her powers, and some believe she wants to carve out a realm of her own.

- ◆ **Provinces:** The tsara rules every province in which she has a law holding (through her tsarevos and boyars), but the rest of Velenoye remains uncontrolled.

**Regency Generated/Accumulated:** 20/6 RP. The tsara must turn over half the RP she generates each domain turn to the Temple of Might.

**Treasury:** 12 GB. The tsara is expected to tithe; after spending GB on realm maintenance and troops, she must turn over half the remaining GB to Lida Marnorin every domain turn.

**Army/Navy:** Because of their continuous wars with the Sword Rust Tribes, Velenoye must maintain a large standing army at all times.

- ◆ 3 units of varsk riders
- ◆ 4 units of Vos levies
- ◆ 3 units of elite infantry
- ◆ 2 units of pikes

By the tsara's decree, the Raiders of Velenoye command the following naval units:

- ◆ 2 drakkar
- ◆ 3 longships

**Regent:** While Fiala Ruszca holds the title of Tsara of Velenoye, she takes her orders from Lida Marnorin almost as if she were a vassal. If Fiala chafes at this arrangement, she is wise enough not to show it. At least half her tsarevos bear spell tattoos personally granted to them by the Winter Witch.

Still in her early thirties, Fiala took over rulership of the realm from her cousin, the late tsar. While in disfavor with the Temple of Might, the former tsar died fighting the Sword Rust Tribes during the latest campaign against them, garnering no protection from his many spell tattoos. The lesson was not lost on the new regent.

Province	Law	Temples	Guilds	Sources
Abrskiy (2/5)	FR (1)	LM (2)	Ni (2)	-
Aralzyk (2/7)	-	LM (2)	VK (2)	FS (5)
Knana (1/8)	FR (1)	LM (1)	VK (1)	FS (6)
Kustagran (2/5)	FR (2)	LM (1)	Ni (2)	-
Norvsk (1/6)	FR (0)	LM (1)	Ni (1)	-
Olapeysk (0/9)	-	-	-	FS (6)
Taldy (1/8)	FR (1)	LM (1)	-	PM (3)
Veslek (4/3)	FR (4)	LM (4)	VK (2)	FS (6)
	-	-	Ni (2)	-

**Abbreviations:** FR=Fiala Ruszca (Tsara of Velenoye); LM=Lida Marnorin (Temple of Might); Ni=Nicoli (Raiders of Velenoye); VK=Viktor Kesskin (Varisk Breeders); FS=Firosk Slecktra ("Fell Secret-Speaker"); PM=Petra Morinoi



No one thinks of Fiala as merely a puppet of Lida Marnorin and the Temple of Might. Although Fiala keeps her ears open to the temple's interests, she herself decides how her realm will be ruled. On occasion, the tsara has publicly disagreed with Lida Marnorin and emerged victorious.

◆ **Lieutenants:** The tsara has several lieutenants. Three are vassals who rule (in her name) the provinces of Abrskiy, Knana, Taldy, and Norvsk. War chiefs all, they lead her troops into battle against the Sword Rust Tribes and sometimes accompany Nikoli or the other Raiders of Velenoye on their "trading" missions.

Fiala has two other lieutenants of note. The first, Galina Whitehand (*FV; Pr3, Kriesha; NE*) entered her service at the behest of the Temple of Might. Technically, she serves Fiala as a spiritual adviser, but all know that she makes her final report to Lida Marnorin.

Fiala's other notable lieutenant, the boyar Josef Kaan (*MV; R7; Ba, minor, 13; NG*) fancies himself a possible consort to the tsara. Despite their difference in alignment, the two seem to be attracted to each other. The "robber-knight" (who has spent most of his time of late trying to win the province of Aralzyk for his tsara) of Velenoye is extremely popular among the common folk of the realm, and most of Velenoye's troops as well. Lida Marnorin despises the ranger, however, and longs for an excuse to outlaw or exile him.

**Important NPCs:** Simply put, the chief Winter Witch of Velenoye is the most powerful and important person in the realm—bar none. Feared and respected by those who hear her name, Lida Marnorin wields her regency like a long-bladed dagger—subtly, but always with a point. She brooks no interference from outsiders and orders the realm as she sees fit. In deference to the warrior nature of the Vos, however, she has not tried to supplant the tsara as the ruler of the realm. That hasn't been necessary—yet.

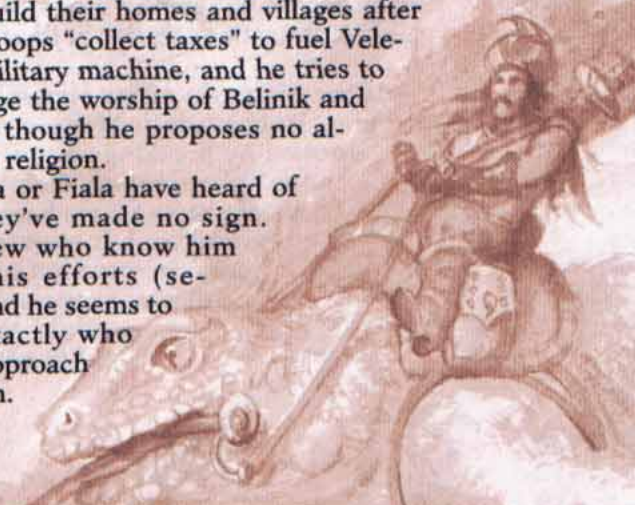
An older woman, Lida has served Kriesha for nearly 40 years and the Temple of Might in Velenoye for 20. As a regent, she has outlived five tsars and tsaras, and she has a capacity for patience and subtlety characteristic of the Winter Witches. Under her rule, Kriesha has risen at the expense of Belinik in Velenoye's Temples, but no followers of the war-god appear strong enough to challenge her. She keeps the tsarevos and warriors of the realm busy fighting the orogs of the Orlenaskyy or raiding other realms to supply Velenoye with necessary goods.



Recently, Lida has given thought to expanding her influence beyond Velenoye. She has discouraged Fiala from increasing the population of the realm's provinces (less chance of a rival temple moving in), but she has shown interest in founding temple holdings within Melyy, Rovninodensk, and the Manticore's domain. It rankles her that the One True Church of Vosgaard, the Temple of Might's main rival in the region, holds so much influence in the awnshegh's domain.

One other character of note survives within hostile Velenoye. Leo Nedskyy (*MV; F6; Br, major, 27; NG*) struggles to bring nona Vos influence to an overwhelmingly torva Vos realm. He travels the region helping peasants rebuild their homes and villages after Fiala's troops "collect taxes" to fuel Velenoye's military machine, and he tries to discourage the worship of Belinik and Kriesha, though he proposes no alternative religion.

If Lida or Fiala have heard of Leo, they've made no sign. Those few who know him praise his efforts (secretly) and he seems to know exactly who he can approach and when.





Some of his friends in the realm believe he gets aid from the Tsor of Melyy, the regent of Rovninodensk, or even Fiala's own lieutenant, Josef Kaan.

**Description:** The shadows of the Orlenaskyy Mountains fall heavily on the open, southern provinces of Velenoye. Once a green, forested land, the realm has been beaten into submission by its oft-brutal lords. Bands of men and women under the command of the tsara's lieutenants forage what little they can from the land and harden themselves for the inevitable next battle.

Only two provinces, Kustagran and Velesk, show any signs of stability. Velesk, the capital province, maintains wheat and potato farms while Kustagran supports a modest fishing trade. Small fishing villages dot Velenoye's protected inlet all the way to Abrskiy, where small subsistence farms take advantage of the relatively protected land.

- ◆ **Capital:** Velesk may be one of the oldest cities in Vosgaard (with the exception of Rovnograd), and it looks it. While the tsara orders her capital's defense and the chief Winter Witch oversees her temple's holdings, little has been done over the years to reinforce or improve the city. Trade and traffic exist in squalor in the tightly-packed city of Velensk, and few people, even warriors, brave the night streets alone.

- ◆ **Sites:** Outwardly a war camp like any other, the *tekid* (base camp) of Josef Kaan hides secrets even from the boyar's beloved tsara. Kaan and his warriors rule the province of Abrskiy for the tsara, and they have been charged with taking Aralzyk, a task in which they have nearly succeeded. But the tsara might not be so pleased with Kaan's successes if she knew what his own *tekid* contained: nona refugees, driven from Velesk and the other torva provinces and given shelter by the boyar himself. Rumors hint that Leo Nedskyy finds shelter in Josef's *tekid*.

**Allies:** Velenoye exists almost in a vacuum. Its chief ally is Melyy, a realm that formed by breaking away from Velenoye's dominance. Relations between the two have been strained ever since, but even the tsara's pride won't stand in the way of her common sense—she would take back Melyy and its rich

silver mines if she could be assured of victory, but for now, she prefers Melyy as a lukewarm ally rather than a rich enemy.

**Enemies:** The Sword Rust Tribes have tried to take Velenoye's mountain provinces for years, and Velenoye has tried expanding north into their territory for just as long. Both realms despise each other, and each would do anything to destroy the other. Velenoye also has an ancient enmity with Tuar Annwn, but that has slept soundly for years.

**DM's Secrets:** The following secrets should help stir up action within Velenoye.

- ◆ The boyar Josef Kaan actually employs Leo Nedskyy. Nedskyy seeks out nona sympathizers and directs them to Kaan's Abrskiy camp. He keeps a careful eye out for spies as well as talented individuals Kaan might be able to use. Already Nedskyy has found a few priests of nontraditional Vos faiths (Iraikhan and Ayairda) willing to set up secret temples in either Abrskiy or Aralzyk as soon as Josef gives the word. Rumor has it that Josef is waiting until the tsara tries to claim Aralzyk; while her resources are diverted, he will begin a carefully-orchestrated uprising in Aralzyk and Abrskiy. In order for the operation to work, Kaan would like the support of Firosk Slecktra, but he has no way to contact her or to guarantee her aid. Kaan would like nothing more than to throw the Temple of Might and Lida Marnorin out of the realm, and perhaps gain control of a province or two himself.

- ◆ A simple man, Viktor Klesskin desires nothing more than to care for Velenoye's varsk herds and improve their breeding stock. His original animals were varsk stolen from Rovninodensk (by the Raiders of Velenoye, no doubt), and he longs to share secrets and bloodlines with the western realm. But the tsara (at the direction of Lida Marnorin) has forbidden it. So, secretly, Viktor has contacted both Josef Kaan and the pirate Nikoli in the hope that one will help him set up a secret trade route with Rovninodensk.

Unfortunately for the simple Viktor, both his contacts seek to use him for their own purposes. Josef wants trained varsk for his rebellion and Nikoli wants information he can trade to either Marnorin or the tsara for power and influence. Both are working hard to set up the varsk breeder; it is only a matter of time before one succeeds.







# zoloskaya

**Alignment:** Neutral.

**Provinces/Holdings:** Two factions controlled all the provinces and holdings within Zoloskaya's borders until the "awakening" of the dragon of Vstaive Peak. Remarkably, the two factions seem to get along well.

*Refer to the map on page 13.*

- ◆ **Law:** Uvna Farzeb (FV; W15; Vo, minor, 22; LN) has ruled much of the law in the realm since the Days of Fire and Zoloskaya's transformation. She rules the realm but depends heavily on the temple of Lirovka, the Waning Moon, for support.
- ◆ **Temples:** The Waning Moon, one of Cerilia's few temples to Lirovka (Ruornil) wields overwhelming influence in Zoloskaya. Responsible for the end of the Days of Fire, the temple certainly saved the realm from becoming yet another war-torn Vos state.
- ◆ **Guilds:** No organized trade takes place in the realm though trade is not expressly forbidden. Zoloskaya's secretive nature discourages trade with outsiders.
- ◆ **Sources:** The Silver Servant controls most of the sources. The dragon of Vstaive Peak has claimed a few western holdings, but emissaries from Zoloskaya have been sent to negotiate for their release.
- ◆ **Provinces:** As mentioned, Uvna Farzeb rules all the provinces of Zoloskaya, but with a remarkably light hand.

**Regency Generated/Accumulated:** 43/70 RP.  
**Treasury:** 9 GB.

**Army/Navy:** Zoloskaya maintains only a token army and a small navy, relying on its regents' magical talents to protect its borders.

- ◆ 2 units of Uvna Sarveklose (Silver Knights)
- ◆ 2 units of Garask infantry (elite infantry)
- ◆ 1 unit of scouts
- ◆ 1 drakkar
- ◆ 1 longship

*Note:* Unless completely surprised, no unit of Zoloskaya's troops will enter battle without the backing of both wizard and priest battle spells (and, with enough warning, realm spells).

Province	Law	Temples	Guilds	Sources
Adoga (5/2)	UF (3)	GU (4)	-	UF (2)
Cherovnal (1/6)	UF (1)	-	-	UF (2)
	-	-	-	VL (3)
Dnepol (1/6)	UF (1)	-	-	UF (4)
	-	-	-	VL (2)
Levasta (3/4)	UF (2)	GU (1)	-	UF (3)
Nenza (3/4)	UF (2)	GU (1)	-	UF (2)
Sykvar (3/4)	GU (2)	GU (3)	-	UF (3)
Tgar (1/6)	GU (1)	GU (1)	-	UF (4)
	-	-	-	VL (2)
Tsipek (2/5)	UF (2)	-	-	UF (4)

**Abbreviations:** UF=Uvna Farzeb (The Silver Servant); GU=Garask Ufslev ("Waning Moon"); VL=Vore Lekiniskiy (the Dragon of Vstaive Peak)

**Regent:** The regent of the realm calls himself Uvna Farzeb (the Silver Servant) and has ruled Zoloskaya for nearly 50 years. This seems impossible to those few who have met him personally—the man appears to be no more than 40 years old.

That estimate is obviously wrong (by a factor of ten!). "Uvna Farzeb," whatever his true name, has been living in Vosgaard for at least 400 years.

Uvna appears to be a throwback to earlier Vos attitudes and times. Introspective and somewhat secretive, the short, broad-shouldered wizard began preaching in Vosgaard about Lirovka's mysteries just after Tsarevic Basil repelled the Brecht League. Uvna, like the tsarevic did, seems to believe Vosgaard could be united, but not under the influence of Belinik or Kriesha.

When Uvna came to Zoloskaya, it was one of the most fractious and self-destructive of the Vos realms. Raiders plied the coastal waters, preying on neighboring Vos and Khinasi realms as well as each other. Slaughter and famine ruled the land and the short-lived "pirate kings" of Zoloskaya only made matters worse.

Taking a hand in local matters, Uvna and a few companions slew or drove away most of the pirate kings. A few they converted to their cause. They began to unite the peasantry against the remaining pirate strongholds until only one, the Varskulazen (the "Varsk's Fang") remained, on the northern tip of the peninsula.



The ruler of the Varskulazen collected as many warriors, reavers, and mercenaries as he could muster and sent them out against Uvna's followers, slaying and burning those who got in the way. Uvna's spells deflected some of this damage, but most of his companions died in the struggle and much of the realm burned; the Days of Fire threatened to consume Zoloskaya.

But Uvna and a priest of Ruornil, one Aduras Vesk, remained. Escaping the reavers, they fought their way to Varskulazen and confronted the pirate king in his keep. Vesk died in the struggle but made it possible for Uvna to unleash incredible magical forces against the pirate king and his allies. The land was sun-dered (producing those two barren islands, the Varsk's Fangs, just off the coast of Zoloskaya) but the Days of Fire ended.

Uvna then tried to influence the people of the realm toward his beliefs and the teachings of Aduras Vesk. He encouraged the worship of Lirovka over Belinik and Kriesha and discouraged contact with the other Vos realms. Since most of the warriors and priests of Zoloskaya died during the Days of Fire, Uvna faced little opposition.

♦ **Lieutenants:** Uvna has several lieutenants known as the Slvenka Uvna ("Mages of the Moon"). At all times, two or three of them wander the land, checking Uvna's sources, while a few more guard the Silver Star keep in Polovtsiya.

**Important NPCs:** The regent of the Waning Moon temple, Karel Rhonskal (*F1/2E*; *Pr8*, *Lirovka*; *Vo*, minor, 19; *NG*), rules the Garask Ufslev and her law holdings as a mother guides her child—firmly, but with great compassion. She is the daughter of the priest Aduras Vesk and his elven wife. Most people say she takes after her elven mother in all but her devotion to Lirovka.

Raised by Uvna when her mother returned to her elven home (no one knows which elf kingdom the woman came from), Karel treats the still-hale wizard as if he were an absent-minded gaffer. She tries not to bother him with the troubles that arise around her temples and law holdings and she protects him from interfering outsiders. Adventurers who want to see Uvna for some reason will probably have to go through Karel first.

Despite the great losses among the raiders of Zoloskaya, they did not die heirless. Fleeing Varskulazen's destruction with his grandmother and father, Anatoli Skul (*MV*; *F10*; *Az*, minor, 16; *LE*) only vaguely remembers the carnage caused by Uvna and his forces. Skul's father never had the opportunity to avenge his

own father's death, but Anatoli, an accomplished warrior well into middle age, has returned to Zoloskaya intent on the Silver Servant's destruction. Most often, Skul lurks in the woods of Cherovnal and Dnepol, where Uvna's influence in the realm is weakest. He has a few followers—Vos men and women who secretly long for the return of the old ways.

**Description:** Carefully tended and seemingly at peace with nature, Zoloskaya's appearance belies its Vos heritage—at least, that's what the few outsiders who visit the land believe. While some wildness still exists, especially in the foothills of the eastern Vstavei Mountains, the realm seems too peaceful for a Vos land. The influence of Uvna Farzeb and the church of Lirovka have done wonders.

♦ **Capital:** Polovtsiya ("rising sun") is a quiet, simple city. With no organized trade guilds and little outside shipping, the seaport hardly seems noteworthy. Fishermen and a few inland traders come here to distribute their wares, and the courts of Uvna Farzeb and the Temple of Lirovka both have headquarters here, but the city remains remarkably quiet.

♦ **Sites:** Since the return of Vore Lekiniskiy and Anatoli Skul, the western provinces of Zoloskaya have reverted, ever so slightly, to the wildness of old. In Dnepol, in fact, in a valley of the Vstavei Mountains, an armed camp has been set up by the vengeful Skul.

**Allies:** Because of Zoloskaya's isolationist policies, it has no known allies.

**Enemies:** A few people believe the Raven, angered by the peace of Zoloskaya and perhaps a little concerned by Uvna's considerable power and fame, helped Anatoli Skul return to his homeland. If that is so, the awnshegh may use the would-be boyar as a distraction in his next invasion of Yeminskiy.

**DM's Secrets:** Zoloskaya holds many secrets, just a few of which can be listed here.

♦ When Vore Lekiniskiy, the dragon of Vstaive Peak, awoke from his long slumber, he stretched out his magical powers and seized two source holdings in Zoloskaya. While Uvna Farzeb has nothing





against the ancient dragon, he has sent emissaries to the beast in the hope of negotiating at least a nonaggression pact with the creature. Several volunteers among his own apprentices and the Waning Moon's acolytes made the trip toward Yeninskiy some months ago.

They never arrived. Anatoli Skul ambushed them as they crossed over the mountains and tortured them into revealing their mission. He then sent his operatives with a challenge for the dragon, but used Uvna's seal to legitimize it. The message commands Vore to remove his sources and fly to the very southern tip of the mountain chain or face Uvna's wrath. Obviously, Skul hopes to infuriate the dragon and provoke him into attacking Zoloskaya. It is possible, however, that someone might learn of Skul's deceit and either intercept these fraudulent emissaries or explain the situation to Vore Lekiniskiy.

◆ All popular legends concerning Uvna's age and nature are wrong. "Uvna," under a different name, bore Lirovka's standard at the battle of Mount Deismaar and stood by him when Vorynn died fighting Azrai. Charged with looking after the errant Vos, Uvna now directly serves the Silver Prince and has only recently managed to attempt a reconciliation between Vorynn's old champion and the Vos people.

If this reconciliation has any chance of success, the priests of Belinik and Kriesha will be informed directly. Perhaps unbeknownst of the power they will face, war priests and winter witches may spur an invasion of Zoloskaya by their faithful, fearful followers. Even the power of a god's herald may not be able to withstand a reuniting of the war tribes of the Vos.

◆ Uvna does not come from Lirovka directly but does come from somewhere other than Cerilia. Could he be a descendant of the ancient Adurian Vos—and might tribes of that mystical people still survive in the lower continent? Or is there a far-removed tribe of Lirovka-worshiping, secretive Vos living somewhere in or near Vosgaard, hoping to overcome their people's warlike, superstitious ways before Azrai, or another evil god, attempts to destroy Cerilia again?

◆ The mother of the half-elf Karel Rhonskal did not come from the Aelvinnwode, Cwmb Bheinn, or Innishiere, but Tuar Annwn itself. As secretive and dangerous as any elf can be, she involved herself in the end of the Days of Fire for love of Karel's father—and came to regret her actions deeply upon his death. She returned to Tuar Annwn's secret forests soon after her husband perished, leaving her child to be raised by Uvna Farzeb, not caring that he raised her to become the high priest of a human deity.

Karel's mother still lives in Tuar Annwn, and could be heard from again. Secret emissaries, or Karel's mother herself, may come looking for her daughter, perhaps to bring her safely to the elven realm for her protection. The high priest of Lirovka may wish to send her own emissaries to Tuar Annwn, to explain why she cannot abandon her faith even for her mother. If Karel decides to go herself, she will need escorts to ensure that she can again leave the forests safely.



# Hjorig

**Alignment:** Neutral.

**Provinces/Holdings:** Sparsely populated but not overly wild, the provinces of Hjorig provide a buffer between Vosgaard and the Brecht Overlook states.

- ◆ **Law:** The Jarl of Hjorig, Einar Kuppel (MRj; F7; Ba, major, 23; NE) flouts Rjurik tradition by governing the law of the land as its sole monarch. Clan leaders serve as his courtiers, but this jealous lord hardly rewards them with any responsibility or significant influence.
- ◆ **Temples:** The Tor of Lirorn, a less-than-traditional Rjurik temple, looks after the woodsmen and trappers of Hjorig. In a few provinces, the dark temple of Yeenoghu (a humanoid deity worshiped by the gnolls of the Fells) has gained some influence.
- ◆ **Guilds:** Chafing at the restrictive law of the land, Borg Hedsen (MRj; R5; An, minor, 16; NG) and his traders keep passes for honest trade open. Though many of the guild holdings survive the winters by foraging in Brecht, Vos, and gnoll territories, Borg is attempting to set up a legitimate lumber and trapping business.
- ◆ **Sources:** Until a few years ago, a wizard of Anuirean heritage known as Tiandra Faelestan (FAn; W7; Br, major, 25; N) controlled several sources in Hjorig. She disappeared, however, and her holdings have gone uncontrolled ever since.
- ◆ **Provinces:** The jarl rules nearly all the provinces of Hjorig personally, not trusting his clan chiefs to rule in his name. This has resulted in some defections and some losses: The province of Coryl rebelled and has no current ruler, and the gnolls of the Fells control Njorl and Kobar.

**Regency Generated/Accumulated:** 39/2 RP. The Jarl of Hjorig has spent more than a little regency just trying to maintain his realm. He gains 6 RP from his rulership of Wolfgaard.

**Treasury:** 2 GB. The recent rebellion in Coryl and the takeover of two provinces by the gnolls have drained Hjorig's treasury.

**Army/Navy:** Many of Hjorig's troops defected rather than fight their kinsmen in Coryl, but the Jarl kept some troops loyal.

- ◆ 2 units of infantry
- ◆ 2 units of scouts
- ◆ 2 units of archers

**Regent:** Jarl Einar Kuppel inherited the rulership of Hjorig from his father and continues a

Province	Law	Temples	Guilds	Sources
Bjorlen (3/2)	EK (2)	TE (1)	DB (3)	-
Coryl (1/6)	-	TE (1)	-	-
Kobar (1/4)	Gn (0)	GF (1)	-	-
Kumar (3/2)	EK (3)	TE (2)	DB (2)	-
Haarlik (2/3)	EK (1)	TE (2)	DB (1)	-
Lektra (4/1)	EK (4)	-	DB (3)	-
Njorl (1/4)	Gn (0)	GF (0)	-	-
Skaplan (3/2)	EK (2)	-	DB (1)	-
Sodenside (2/3)	EK (1)	TE (2)	DB (2)	-
Ustuheim (2/3)	EK (1)	-	DB (1)	-

**Abbreviations:** EK=Jarl Einar Kuppel (Jarl of Hjorig); Gn=The Gnoll Fells; TE= Tor of Lirorn (Tor Elke); GF=Ghus Feuerscorn (Yeenoghu's Dark Curse); DB=Donnek Borg Forjen (Borg Hedsen Traders)

long dynasty of Rjurik rulers-in-exile that began nearly six centuries ago. He is hardly the finest specimen of Rjurik leadership, as his people are now learning.

Like Vos realms, Rjurik domains tend to select their leaders based on competency rather than heritage. But Hjorig has always been an exception. Perhaps that is why, in one of the many clan wars that wracked the Rjurik Highlands after the departure of Anuirean influence, a large group of Rjurik nobles, along with many supporters, was forced to flee for their lives across the Great Bay and inland over the Drachenaurs.





If any Rjurik folk remember the cause of this separation, they remember that Hjorig's lords favored heredity over clan vote, centralized rulership over elder speakers, and settlement over migration. These lords fought to keep what they believed to be their "traditions," and they lost. They fled the Rjurik lands across the Great Bay and found unexplored lands between Vosgaard and Brechtür. Here they settled, ousting the few Brechts and the many creatures in residence.

Ever since, Hjorig has been ruled by hereditary leaders. The lineage is hardly unbent, but has remained unbroken for six centuries through wars, rebellions, invasions, and expansions. Each Hjorig noble can trace his or her ancestry back to the fugitives that struggled to civilize this region.

The bloodline of Hjorig has thinned somewhat over the past generations. Jarl Einar Kuppel, its latest lord, has handsome enough features and a stout enough body, but something is wrong in his attitudes. Brutal and perverted, he has gone against all clan claims to make Hjorig a reflection of his own power. The realm has risen up against his will twice and will do so again if nothing can be done against him.

**Important NPCs:** The Tor of Lirorn, Tor Elke (FRj; Pr5, Lirorn; An, minor, 9; NG), is the jarl's closest living relative (his first cousin)

and, therefore, his most dangerous enemy (to his view, anyway). He refuses to believe that the young Tor, born in Wolfgaard and educated in the ways of Lirorn and the woodlands, does not desire his throne. Certainly many of the jarl's advisers, eager to fuel his paranoia for their own purposes, have pointed to the Tor as a possible leader of rebels. They may push her into the role unwilling—already, agents of the jarl have caused the destruction of the Temple of Lirorn in Lektra and are speaking out against the Tor in other provinces.

The Tor may have some unexpected allies, however. One of the clan chiefs, a half-Brecht, half-Rjurik man named Otto Thorssen (MRj/Br; R7; CG), worships at the temple of Lirorn in Coryl and may have been partially responsible for the rebellion there. Handsome and affable, Otto's heritage is all that stands in the way of making him a candidate for regency. Related distantly to the current jarl's family, he lacks only a bloodline for his claim to be valid. Already the peasants of Coryl, Bjorlen, and Ustuheim look to him for protection against their own regent.

The Donnek Borg Forjen (regent of the Borg Hedsen Traders) would just as soon keep out of politics. He wars against his jarl's outlandish attitudes only when putting forth his ideas about trade and commerce. Three times now he has set up trade routes with the Brechts





of Grevesmühl and Drachenward, and thrice the jarl has spoiled his plans. Still, the *donnek* is a traditionalist and refuses to rebel against his clanlord. Some whisper that Einar amuses himself by seeing how far he can push the guildmaster before the man breaks.

**Description:** Hilly and rocky but not altogether barren, Hjorig could be a fine realm if not for its neighbors and its own regent. Made defensible by nature and its early settlers, Hjorig's people have repelled invasions by the Vos, the gnolls, the Brechts, and all sorts of strange creatures of the Drachenaaur Mountains and turned their cold but less-than-frigid land into something of a northern garden spot. Over the past few generations, however, as the Kuppel line has degenerated, the realm has turned more and more wild. In a few more decades, if nothing is done, Hjorig could fall into chaos and anarchy.

◆ **Capital:** Originally a temporary hold to guard the Rulsfeg Pass, Tronso grew into a city over time. It is now a medium-sized castle surrounded by many fortified buildings. With Borg Forjen making Tronso the center of his major holding, some commerce exists within the keep.

◆ **Sites:** The Hillfort of Coryl is a fortified keep high in the northern mountains of the province. It looks down over the Rulsfeg Pass and, on a clear day, watchers from the fort can see the capital of Tronso. Sometimes, the jarl imagines he can see the hiding place of the Coryl rebels from his high seat in Tronso's main tower, and it is said that he has spent hours raving and cursing its existence.

**Allies:** Thanks to the jarl's sociopathic tendencies, Hjorig has no real allies. Both Grevesmühl and Drachenward have entertained trade agreements with the exiled Rjurik but they have grown tired of broken promises. Some say the jarl fancies approaching the Hag for support against the rebels, but even his closest advisers do not believe Einar to be *that* crazy.

**Enemies:** Hjorig has fought war after war against the Gnoll Fells and another may start again at any time. Its chief enemies, however, come from within.

**DM's Secrets:** A hotbed of rebellion and betrayal, Hjorig is a storied realm and one worthy of note.

◆ The Tor of Lirorn has tired of the jarl's crazed actions. She has secretly made a pact with Otto Thorssen. If he can find a willing donor or can somehow capture the jarl, she will perform a ceremony of investiture to give Otto a bloodline.

◆ The jarl has seized several priests of Lirorn and demanded that the Tor yield herself to him or they will die horribly. He has also threatened to use his few loyal troops to reduce the Tor's holdings throughout Hjorig, as he did in Lektra. No one knows what the jarl has planned for the Tor, but a few believe a marriage (violating the Blood and Family Laws because of their close kinship) may be on his mind.

◆ Some say the jarl destroyed Tiandra Faelstan rather than risk her powers falling into the hands of rebels. A few even believe the Tor of Lirorn, backed by the fear most Rjurik have of wizardly magic, assisted in her destruction. A *very* few believe Tiandra survived the attempt but hid in Wolfgaard, aided by the Wolf himself, and abandoned her source holdings in an effort to appear dead.

Whatever the case, Tiandra (or someone as like her as a sister) has returned to Hjorig. Some say she helped the gnolls of the Fells capture two of Hjorig's provinces, while others believe she may have sided with the Coryl rebels and made the difference. Rumors are flying all over the land, and fear of wizardly magic and revenge is in the air.





# the gnoll fells

**T**he deep woods of the Grovnekevic Forest blankets the craggy landscape characteristic of the Gnoll Fells. Like the creatures that give the Fells their name, the realm is uneven and unpleasant, treacherous and unforgiving.

**Alignment:** Varies, but always chaotic.

**Provinces/Holdings:** Only a few of the Gnoll Fells' provinces can truly be called settled. Chaotic and warlike by nature, the gnolls in this realm have done little to civilize their society or organize holdings. Only a few exceptional creatures have managed to dominate their fellows successfully enough to establish rulership or holdings of any kind.

## part II: nonhuman and awnshegh realms

**Note:** Scouts, explorers, and soldiers from other lands have named the provinces of the Gnoll Fells. Gnolls care little for place names, borders, and the like. Brecht and Rjurik scouts and warriors account for most province names.

Through the power of Yeenoghu's Dark Curse, Ghus Feuerscorn (*MGn; Pr4, Yeenoghu; Az, minor, 19; LE*) has managed to organize and control a good number of the gnolls of the "Fell Kingdom," as his realm is sometimes called. Through him, the clans and small tribes of gnolls have established a primitive, brutal form of centralized government.

- ◆ **Law:** The chaotic nature of the gnolls and the terrain of the craggy Gnoll Fells have made it impossible for any one family leader or clan chief to establish any sort of law holding within the realm.
- ◆ **Temples:** An ambitious, exceptional gnoll, Ghus Feuerscorn has "converted" nearly every gnoll of the Fells (and a considerable number outside the realm) to Yeenoghu's Dark Curse. His order's commands are the only rules these gnolls will live by.
- ◆ **Guilds:** Gold, silver, and weapons have always appealed to gnolls. When the Pirates of Grabentod needed the dark pine lumber of the Fells for their ships, the gnolls were happy to oblige. Now, something akin to an organized trade guild exists (mockingly nicknamed the "Tradegnolls" by the Grabbers) thanks to another unusual gnoll named Gnoreg Torglyde (*MGn; T6; An, minor, 11; N*).
- ◆ **Sources:** Only the Dragon of Drachenward (*MDragon; W21; ???; N*) controlled any sources in the Gnoll Fells until recently. Someone from Tuar Annwn has reached into Nys Annwn and made its mebhagh part of his or her magic holdings.

- ◆ **Provinces:** Ghus has moved slowly in his attempts at unifying the gnolls of the Fells and rules only two provinces: Mickelbraun and Schlessblut. The rest of the Gnoll Fells remains uncontrolled.

**Regent:** Ghus Feuerscorn came of age fighting for food and survival among the high crags and deep valleys of the Gnoll Fells. He has fought alongside and against orogs, trolls, goblins, and even men, but his primary calling is not as a warrior: Ghus Feuerscorn is a shaman.

Province	Law	Temples	Guilds	Sources
Holdane's End (2/7)	-	GF (2)	-	Dr (3)
Mickelbraun (3/6)	-	GF (3)	-	-
Nordricht (2/7)	-	GF (2)	GT (2)	-
Nys Annwn (0/9)	-	-	-	TA (9)
Schlessblut (3/6)	-	GF (3)	GT (3)	-
Shudder Cliff (1/8)	-	GF (1)	GT (1)	-
Twopeak (2/7)	-	GF (1)	GT (1)	Dr (6)

**Abbreviations:** GF=Ghus Feuerscorn (Yeenoghu's Dark Curse); Dr=The Dragon; GT=Gnoreg Torglyde (The Tradegnolls); TA=Tuar Annwn (unknown)



Unlike orogs, gnolls of Cerilia do not revere shamans or priests. They consider those "touched by the gods" as somewhat useful but inferior. Not so Ghus—he established himself as a hardy fighter before "turning to Yeenoghu," and though many of his peers consider him strange, they respect his physical power.

Because of this respect, Ghus, unlike most of the gnolls of the Fells, can move freely within the realm, meeting and negotiating with family and clan heads. Other gnolls, when they leave the relative safety of their familial territory, become prey for others. Ghus has begun to change that, using his shamanistic powers and Yeenoghu's dark name to cow his fellow gnolls into compliance.

◆ **Strengths:** Ghus Feuerscorn is a rare gnoll who can see beyond the immediate familial or band unit. He has managed to organize many of the gnoll war bands (under the guidance of Yeenoghu's Dark Curse) and has turned the wild land of the Gnoll Fells into the beginnings of a realm. His personal power and apparent charisma place him in good stead, and most of the gnolls under his command consider him somewhat blessed (or at least extremely lucky).

◆ **Weaknesses:** Forced to prove his right to rule at every turn, the foresighted Feuerscorn has not managed to establish any sort of law in the Gnoll Fells. When he does not pay close attention to his subjects, they fight amongst each other or waste their resources battling the other creatures of the Fells.

Ghus has an amazingly bad temper. It is a very gnollish temper and does not alienate his followers, but he recognizes it as a weakness. Quite often, instead of using his superior wisdom or charisma to manipulate or win over challengers to his rule, he or his followers brutally massacre the challenger and his family. While this helps keep other gnolls in line, the tactic wastes potential resources.

With regard to the outside world, Ghus is one of the few gnolls who recognizes just how large it must be (and he seriously underestimates Cerilia's size). As a result, he is an extremely naive negotiator and has been virtually cheated by those he deals with outside the realm. Still, making any trade or diplomatic contacts outside the Fells is progress for the emerging realm, and Ghus is learning slowly.

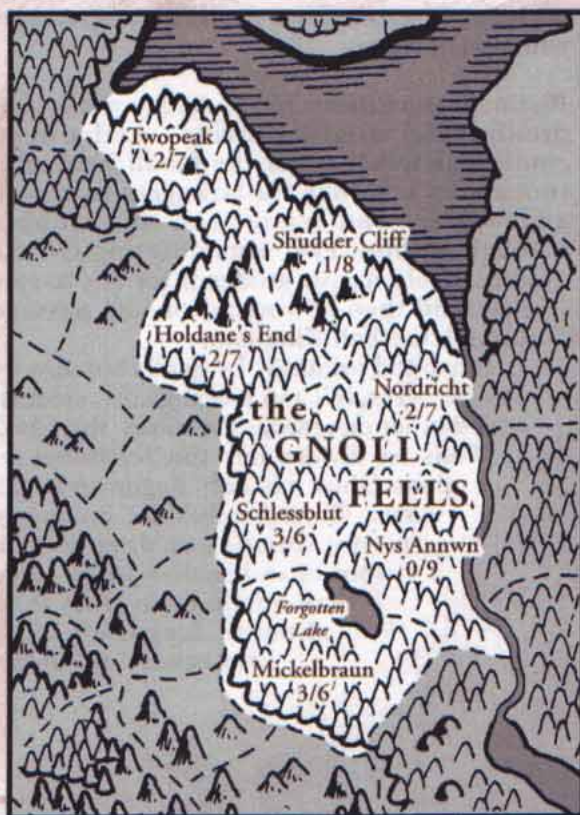
◆ **Lieutenants:** Because of his followers' unreliability, Ghus is forced to have several lieutenants and henchmen. His most impressive include Szorgig (FM; F7; CE) the troll, Kuruhs (MGN; Pr3, Yeenoghu; LE) the flind shaman, and Gnoreg Torglyde the trader.

Szorgig serves as Feuerscorn's bodyguard and strongman, leading a small band of trolls. Ghus often sends this troop to handle rebellious gnoll factions; Szorgig seems fairly intelligent for a troll. She hardly ever exceeds her orders where violence is concerned.

Families of flinds (a subspecies of gnoll described fully in the MONSTROUS MANUAL® tome) are occasionally found living in community with gnolls and are considered good luck. That Kuruhs chose to be a shaman and serve Ghus helped the priest of Yeenoghu establish himself with many gnoll families. Kuruhs often travels the Fells, inspecting Ghus's holdings and winning over more followers with his extremely charismatic (to gnolls) nature.

A regent in his own right, Gnoreg Torglyde might have died fighting his own kind if not for Ghus. A thief by nature, Gnoreg's own family actually cast him out (i.e., tried to kill him) at an early age because he could not stop stealing from their neighbors (igniting feud after feud). Gnoreg joined Ghus out of desperation and has managed to turn his thieving skills to the regent's advantage.

◆ **Current Plans:** Ghus seems fixated on establishing a gnoll presence outside the Fells even before he has solidified his hold on the





realm. He has sent or led several expeditions into Grevesmühl and has established several temples to Yeenoghu there. Outside of the dangerous Groll Fells, these holdings (manned by bands of gnolls and other humanoids sent to raid the Brecht lands) have prospered. Ghus often visits them or sends Kuruhs for news.

**Army:** Large bands of gnolls and humanoids live within the Fells. In addition to the difficult terrain, an invading army would face 1d4 groups of monster units in each province (with the exception of Nys Annwn, which is eerily empty). Ghus commands the following units of gnolls:

- ◆ 6 Groll Marauders
- ◆ 2 Troll Legions

Normally, each unit of Groll Marauders remains in its home province (one per province with the exception of Nys Annwn). If Ghus, Szorgig, or Kuruhs travels to a province, the units can move into other provinces without incident. However, if a gnoll unit goes from one province to another without one of these leaders, trouble could arise. Battles could break out between the gnoll units and they could destroy each other.

The two Troll Legions (usually stationed in Mickelbraun and Schlessblut) can move between provinces without the presence of one of the leaders, but Ghus nearly always remains with one of them.

**Realm Description:** High, craggy peaks, unpredictable, winding ravines, and a deep coniferous forest cover the Groll Fells. Extremely treacherous for strangers to travel, adventurers and armies can find trouble enough without ever encountering Ghus's forces. Only native guides offer any assurance (and then not much) of safe passage through the Fell Kingdom.

Inhabited primarily by gnolls but also by trolls, ogres, hill and forest giants, spiders, and other dangerous creatures, the Groll Fells are divided into tiny territorial regions Ghus has only begun to break down. Groll families live on craggy mountainsides or deep within forests and seldom range more than a mile or so from their homes, lest they cross into others' territory.

Monsters appear to be less discriminating, and the sounds of battle often ring through the forests of the Fells as gnolls fight giants, other humanoids, and even each other. The realm has earned its nickname of Fell Kingdom.

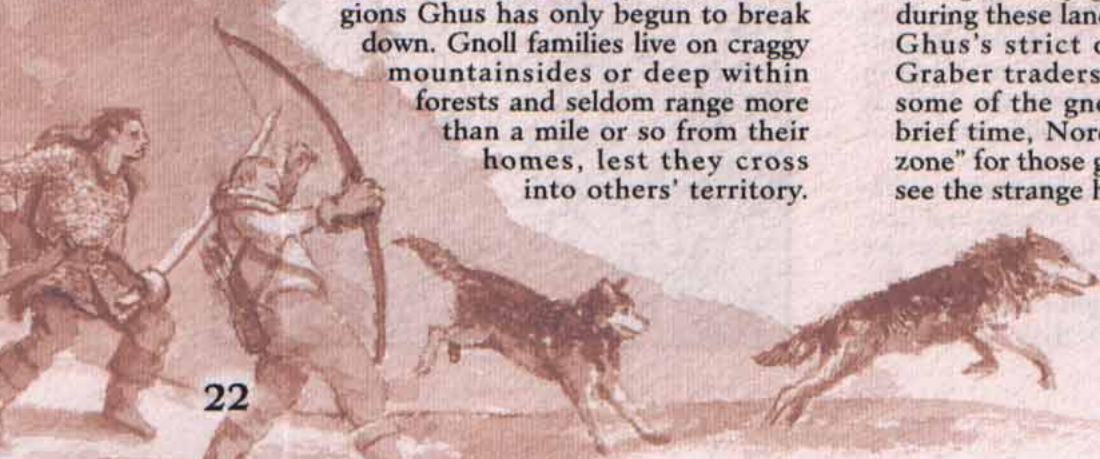
**Important Sites:** Although danger lurks in every ravine, a few sites are worthy of mention.

◆ **Capital:** Ghus has not established any working capital, but the most impressive of his holdings lies in Mickelbraun, near Forgotten Lake. More than three-quarters of Mickelbraun's gnoll population lives around the shore of Forgotten Lake in long, low huts or deep caves cut into the rocky landscape. Ghus has named it the City of Yeenoghu.

The City of Yeenoghu hardly resembles a human city. Aside from the fact that many gnolls, as well as a few other humanoids (slaves or allies, depending on their relative strengths) live in close proximity, Ghus's "city" seems nothing like a human settlement. Still strongly tied to their individual war bands, families, and clans, the gnolls have divided turf within the city and avoid crossing into other neighborhoods unless Ghus himself directs them to.

Ghus allows his people to live this way (it avoids trouble), but he is working to break down clan borders. The Groll Infantry unit that guards Mickelbraun consists of gnolls from most of the major clans and families; they have little trouble fighting side by side. Ghus hopes that, by sending this unit on occasional raids into Daikhar Zhigun, he can breed camaraderie into the ranks. It is a slow process, but seems to be working.

◆ **Site:** During the summer months, ships from Grabentod occasionally visit Nordricht, dropping anchor near the mouth of the northern Annwnalch River (called "deathwater" by the gnolls despite its elven name meaning "lake of silence") and taking on lumber provided by Gnoreg's Trade-gnolls. They give the gnolls gold, food, and Brecht-manufactured weapons in exchange; many gnolls now visit Nordricht during these landings. Curiosity, along with Ghus's strict orders not to attack the Graber traders, has helped break down some of the gnoll familial barriers—for a brief time, Nordricht becomes a "neutral zone" for those gnolls able to travel there to see the strange humans.





- ◆ **Site:** Something must be said of Nys Annwn, or "Death's Finger" as the province name translates. Until Ghus Feuerscorn began establishing himself as a leader of gnolls, this province was like any other in the Gnoll Fells—populated heavily by monsters and humanoids but no more dangerous than any other.

That was several years ago.

Nys Annwn has become almost as fearful a place to the gnolls of the Fells as the Annwnalach River. Unless pressed by extraordinary need, no gnoll will enter Nys Annwn. They believe it to be a haunted, evil place populated by spectres and creatures not of this world.

Natural animals and even monsters fled Nys Annwn when this "influence" entered. Most believe that Tuar Annwn, the heart of the Grovnekevic Forest, is finally growing again, and they fear this more than any human or dwarf army. Ghus has forced a few of his scouts to enter Nys Annwn and has tried using Yeenoghu's gifts to determine what is happening in the province, but both efforts have come to naught.

**Important NPCs:** As if there weren't enough trouble in the Gnoll Fells for Ghus Feuerscorn, Blokken Glorfinder (*MDw; F8; LN*) and his adventuring companions have arrived. Apparently lured to the Fells by stories of fantastic monsters and legends of hidden treasures, this Daikhar Zhigun dwarf has, over the past year or so, led at least four expeditions into Feuerscorn's realm, stirring up its inhabitants and generally causing no end of trouble.

Blokken and his companions (two dwarves, an adventurous Brecht thief, and half a dozen hirelings) speak readily of their heroics amid the Fells. They claim to have killed giant spiders, trolls, giants of all descriptions, and a collection of humanoids that makes the mind boggle. When they return to Daikhar Zhigun, Grevesmühl, or even a safe haven in Rzhlev, they may even tell tales of hidden treasures and magical items they had to leave behind but that they will certainly retrieve once they have a few more able-bodied men.

Ghus would love to know where Blokken and his party have hidden these treasures. At first, he doubted that the adventurers had found anything of value in his realm (when he heard their tales through his contacts in Grevesmühl), but they keep coming back to

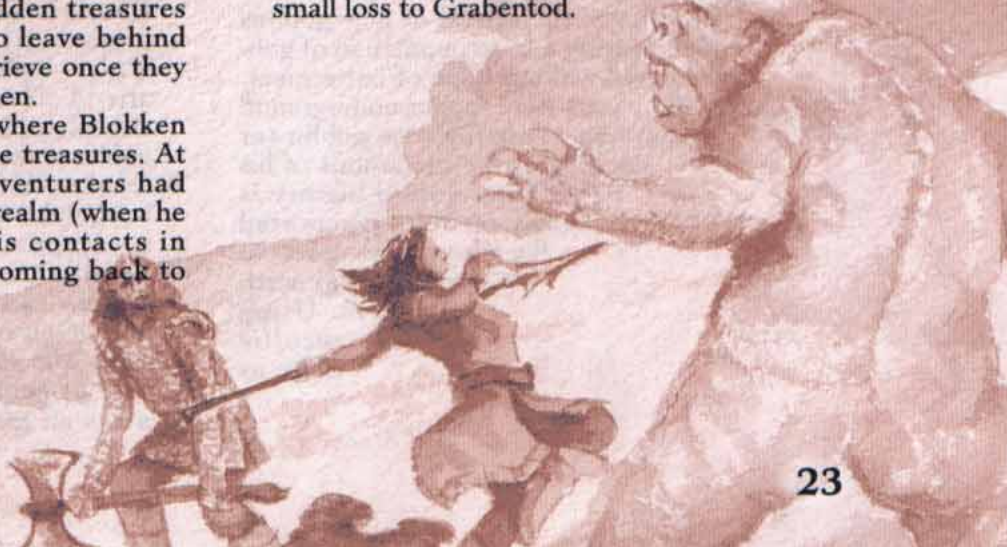
the Fells, causing more than their share of trouble and disrupting his holdings. Ghus has placed a reward on the head of each adventurer (goods and weapons worth about 500 gp)—double that for any brought in alive.

**DM's Secrets:** The Gnoll Fells have a somewhat patchy history, but the DM can use this to his advantage when constructing adventures or domain actions that involve Ghus Feuerscorn or his realm.

- ◆ Popular opinion is that Hjorig and the Gnoll Fells must have a pact of nonaggression. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Jarl of Hjorig "allows" the gnolls of the Fells to travel through his realm because they do not raid his lands very often; they seem content to attack Daikhar Zhigun and Grevesmühl. This stings his pride but keeps his realm mostly at peace.

That is about to change. Ghus Feuerscorn, who controls no law holdings in his own land and rules only a few provinces in the Gnoll Fells, controls two provinces in Hjorig. This, to the jarl, is a slap in the face to Rjurik pride. The Jarl has offered a large reward (nearly 5,000 gp in furs and other trade goods) to anyone able to drive the gnolls out of his land. The jarl will not commit troops to the endeavor, however, fearing he will stir up the gnolls against his realm.

- ◆ Perceiving success in his efforts to unify the gnolls of the Fells through military service, Ghus has decided to hire out bands of gnolls as mercenaries. When the ships of Grabentod come next to Nordricht, he intends to send Szorgig and at least three units of Gnoll Marauders with the Pirates of Grabentod in exchange for mercenary payment. This could put a lot of cash in Feuerscorn's coffers all at once and give the Pirates of Grabentod a powerful mercenary force. They could use the gnolls to attack any nation on the Great Bay, and if the gnolls were defeated, it would be a small loss to Grabentod.





# kal kalathor

The largest and most populous goblin realm on Cerilia, Kal Kalathor does not defer to its neighbors or play the game of civilization practiced by goblin realms to the west. Though not as savage or brutal as their northern cousins, the ice goblins, the goblins of Kal Kalathor do not fear their human, elf, or awnshegh neighbors.

**Alignment:** Neutral evil.

**Provinces/Holdings:** Ruled by the Great Khanate of Kal Kalathor, the realm and its holdings present a united front to the rest of Vosgaard. Fortunately for the peoples of the heartless wastes, this unity is a carefully-crafted illusion; in reality, Kal Kalathor's internal politics would baffle a Khinasi genealogist.

*Note:* The names of Kal Kalathor's 14 provinces are taken from the names of 14 of the 37 existing goblin tribes in the land. These should by no means be considered the most prominent tribes in the land, since the fortunes of goblin tribes rise and fall seasonally and the provinces were named years ago.

Long before humans came to Cerilia, during the humanoid wars, Kal Kalathor became a safe haven for goblinkind. Fleeing domination and extermination by the other races of Cerilia, goblins and hobgoblins retreated underground to the natural dirt and stone caverns of Kal Kalathor. Their leaders welcomed newcomers, fleeing subjugation by the elves, and cheerfully put them to work digging out new tunnels beneath the land. As more goblins and hobgoblins arrived in Kal Kalathor, a hierarchy was established. The older tribes forced the stragglers into service until enough newcomers formed a new tribe and established themselves. More new arrivals would form the next group of workers until they organized, and so on.

Eventually, the arrival of new goblins ended, leaving a large population of goblin slaves without hope of betterment.

Many wars were fought underground until an unusually wise goblin (or one fleeing the predations of his neighbors—goblin history is hardly reliable) discovered the human newcomers to

Cerilia at war with the elves. Using the *gheallie Sidhe* as

cover, this inspired goblin chief captured many members on both sides of the fight (leaving the survivors to blame their known enemies, not the secretive goblins) and won accolades from his fellow humanoids. Using his new popularity (along with a judicious application of force), this goblin, known as Kodxnik, became the first Great Khanate of Kal Kalathor and leader of the now "civilized" tribes. He had the longest tenure of any Great Khanate in Kal Kalathor's history—nearly ten years. In the millenia since, Kal Kalathor has always had a Great Khanate ruling over its many goblin tribes, though the position has lost much of its luster since those first, golden days.

Province	Law	Temples	Guilds	Sources
Boylspyr (2/3)	KK (1)	—	—	FT (2)
Burgl (4/1)	KK (3)	YF (3)	GC (4)	—
Duegel (5/0)	KK (4)	YF (3)	GC (3)	—
	—	MR (2)	—	—
Furzitz (4/1)	KK (3)	YF (2)	MR (3)	—
Hurgz (4/1)	KK (2)	YF (4)	MR (2)	—
Jograb (5/0)	KK (5)	YF (3)	GC (3)	—
	—	MR (2)	—	—
Liispyk (3/4)	KK (3)	YF (1)	GC (3)	DK (0)
Murthang (8/0)	KK (5)	YF (4)	GC (5)	—
	—	MR (3)	—	—
Puggzeg (3/2)	KK (1)	YF (1)	MR (2)	—
Snogatroi (4/4)	KK (4)	—	MR (2)	HF (4)
Thrugger (2/3)	KK (0)	—	—	—
Tiklek (5/0)	KK (1)	—	—	HF (0)
Wormflyd (2/3)	KK (1)	—	GC (2)	—
Zegrabin (4/1)	KK (3)	YF (2)	MR (3)	HF (1)
Zzurk (1/6)	—	—	—	HF (2)
	—	—	FT (2)	—

**Abbreviations:** KK=Kal Kalathor (goblins); FT=Finnegan Truesyght; YF=Shrine of the Yellow Fang (Gorren Spit-tongue); MR=Muckrakers (Korgul Ironwhip); GC=Grasping Claw (Foreg Elfhands); DK=Drago Koskov (Tsar of Molochev); HF=Hogleg Fire-eyes (Sorcerer of Snog)

◆ **Law:** The Great Khanate's chiefs control the established law holdings of Kal Kalathor, ruling in his name. Once a month, the Great Khanate hosts a council in the above-ground city of Kal Murthan; those tribal leaders with enough influence and courage attend. There they feast, trade, and occasionally decide matters that will affect the goblin realm.

◆ **Temples:** With so many tribes of goblins and hobgoblins throughout the realm, it should not surprise anyone that the goblins of Kal Kalathor worship a whole host of goblin deities—and, rumor has it, a few human ones. Gorren Split tongue (*MG*; *Pr6*, *Maglubiyet*; *Ma*, *major*, 33; *LE*) advocates the worship of goblin deities but officially recognizes all his goblin congregation's needs.



Not all high priests of the Shrine of the Yellow Fang have been so understanding in the past, which is partly why their painfully-extracted fangs decorate the temple's ancient altar and his do not.

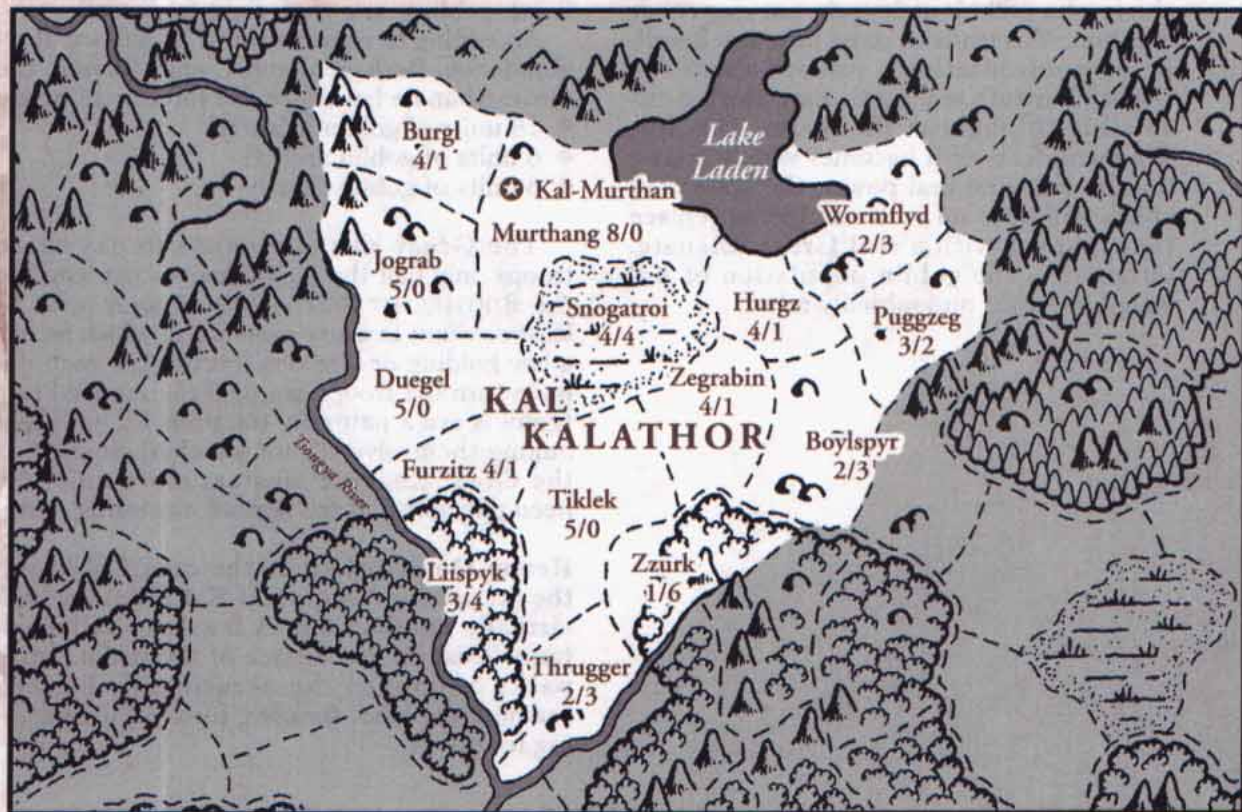
- ◆ **Guilds:** While individual goblins and goblin tribes accomplish much of the trading that goes on between Kal Kalathor and outside realms, two guilds control all the official trade within the land. The Grasping Claw of Kal Kalathor specializes in acquiring and selling slaves—human, dwarf, elf, and even goblin. Their primary customer seems to be the other guild of Kal Kalathor, the Muckrakers. A guild operated mostly by slaves, the Muckrakers grow and harvest the food that feeds the realm—both above and below ground. While it is true that much of this food gets sold to other realms through Kal-Murthang's goblin market, enough remains in the land that all the influential or important goblins can feed their supporters.
- ◆ **Sources:** Not known for their wizards, the goblins of Kal Kalathor have not paid much attention to their source holdings for many years. Recently, however, the always-unusual Snogatroi tribe produced a wizard of some skill. Hogleg Fire-eyes (FG; W5; Vo, minor, 16; NE) is still learning her craft, but she has

already developed a reputation of significance.

- ◆ **Provinces:** The Great Khanate, a goblin chief born Krag Murfang (MG; F5; Ma, major, 24; LE), rules all the provinces of Kal Kalathor with the exception of the rebellious and uncontrolled Thrugger and the intimidating Zzurk.

**Regent:** The post of Great Khanate has been an ancient position of power among the goblins of Kal Kalathor for more than a millenium, but the power of the individual who holds it waxes and wanes as the years pass. Currently, the Great Khanate has little power over his realm and he must defer to his goblin and hobgoblin chiefs if he wants to survive.

A great, blustering fellow, Krag Murfang became the Great Khanate after successfully murdering six of his rivals. Unfortunately, Krag did not rely on his own strength, cleverness, or stealth for these murders, but rather the skills of a human assassin known to goblin-kind only as Terrorknife. Then, when Krag refused to pay Terrorknife his full reward and threatened to set his newly-acquired hobgoblin guards on the assassin, Terrorknife fled the land—but not before revealing that Krag no longer retained his services. The tribal chiefs





agreed not to kill Krag (many actually gained their positions through Terrorknife's activities) but had little respect for their new Khanate. They advised him to pay close attention at their councils and to do *exactly* what they said if he wished to remain in power—not to mention alive.

- ◆ **Strengths:** The Great Khanate, as far as outsiders and most of his subjects are concerned, rules the most powerful goblin kingdom of Cerilia. He arranges the leasing of goblin mercenary companies and can, apparently, bring the weight of the kingdom's resources to bear on any enemy.

Unknowning of their leader's actual status, the goblin population of Kal Kalathor remains remarkably loyal to the Great Khanate. Alone among goblinkind, they have an established, almost mythical reverence for their regent. Great Khanates may come and go (sometimes two or three in a year), but they seldom lose their thrones to an angry populace.

- ◆ **Weaknesses:** Krag has little power. He can be sure of having his orders obeyed only when an unexpected crisis develops or when no goblin chiefs are around to oppose him—even then, he must be careful how he acts or suffer for it later.

Krag, like many goblins who rise to positions of power, is consumed with his own self-importance. He often forgets that the chiefs who pull his strings do not respect or fear him. This leads to some ugly and humiliating confrontations; rumors about the Great Khanate's real status have started circulating throughout the realm. This fills Krag with fear—if it becomes widely known that he holds no real power, the council of chiefs will have no recourse but to replace their puppet with a real Great Khanate. Otherwise, the goblin population of Kal Kalathor would undoubtedly rebel.

- ◆ **Lieutenants:** Of the 37 goblin tribes of Kal Kalathor, 15 chiefs at most have any influence within the Great Khanate's council. These can be considered lieutenants of the Great Khanate or perhaps vassals, but they actually rule the realm using Krag's name and position as they see fit.

- ◆ **Current Plans:** Prompted by a few of his "advisers," the Great Khanate ordered his troops to take back two of Kal Kalathor's western provinces (which, according to most sources, lie just within Molochev's easter border). They have succeeded in taking Kurmansk and have established footholds in two of Molochev's other provinces. This has made the Great Khanate even more popular with his people (goblins like to conquer other races) and he appears willing to send more armies if that will keep him in power longer.

**Military:** While goblins and hobgoblins do not make the best military troops, a lot of goblins live in Kal Kalathor and nearly all of them expect to serve in their realm's armies at some time. Because of their tribal structure and their nature (warlike yet subservient), Kal Kalathor's goblins can raise a large standing army in a time of crisis at half the cost usually necessary. While troops raised in haste seldom perform as well as those trained over time (they usually suffer negative morale modifiers), goblins, as a race, fight fairly well.

According to reports out of Molochev, Rovninodensk, Berhagen, and Cwmb Bheinn, the Great Khanate has a sizeable force at all times:

- ◆ 18 units of goblin infantry
- ◆ 6 units of goblin archers
- ◆ 6 units of goblin cavalry

The Great Khanate needs to pay these troops only half the maintenance cost listed in the *BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook*, but must leave at least one unit in every province in which he has a law holding or lose one level of law each domain turn the troops are paid the reduced rate (goblins are a naturally fractious lot and fight among themselves if not watched closely). If the Great Khanate musters more units, he need pay only half the normal mustering cost.

**Realm Description:** To the casual observer, the steppes and moors of Kal Kalathor look virtually uninhabited. A few huts and small farms exist on the surface of the realm. Small packs of goblins can occasionally be seen roaming the land, foraging for food or searching for slaves.



But casual observers do not survive well in Kal Kalathor; the realm is riddled with pit traps. All but two of the goblin kingdom's provinces house most of their population underground. Dirty, smelly, filth-ridden holes, these caverns nevertheless provide natural protection for the goblin kingdom. All holdings in Kal Kalathor (with the exception of those in Snogatroi and Zzurk) are considered fortified. All are connected (with those two exceptions) by underground tunnels that serve as roads. Slaves taken by the goblins will get to know those irregular, unpleasant tunnels well—only slaves work outside on the surface farms or as herders to the goblins' pigs, sheep, and cattle. Nongoblins, especially dwarves (because they're good at it) and elves (because they hate it) are put to work delving and repairing the underground lairs of the goblins.

**Important Sites:** Many important sites exist within Kal Kalathor, but nongoblins would know of only a few.

- ◆ **Capital:** The one place in the realm that nongoblins are occasionally welcome (as something other than slaves), the above-ground city of Kal-Murthan, the Goblin City, stands within sight of both Lake Ladan and the mysterious Mistmoor. When this Goblin City opens its gates for business, traders and adventurers from Molochev, Rovninodensk, Rhzlev, and sometimes even Berhagen come to visit. Here, slaves, herd-beasts, and foodstuffs can be bought and sold at the famous Goblin Market, and those friendly to the realm may be invited to share in the Great Khanate's Council—a party disguised as a political affair that can last for days or weeks at a time.

Still, even in Kal-Murthan, a visitor must watch his step. Unaccustomed to deferring to goblins, hobgoblins, and other humanoids, a Vos warrior or Brecht merchant may find himself outnumbered and in serious trouble if he steps on the wrong toes. Even obeying the goblins' oft-conflicting rules of conduct is no guarantee of safe passage; today's honored guest may find himself tomorrow's auction block slave.

- ◆ **Cities:** Each of the most important tribes of Kal Kalathor controls a sizeable underground settlement. The Snogatroi rule an above-ground swampland fortress. This fort, built on a giant rock island near the center of the province, is home to the Sorcerer of Snog. Her ludicrous title belies her fierceness, and rumor has it that she's been studying necromancy as well as traditional wizardry. If so, she may be attempting to defend

the swamp province's borders with undead creations rather than relying on her tribe's goblin soldiers.

- ◆ **Site:** The elves of Cwmb Bheinn seldom venture into the province of Zzurk even though the goblins of Kal Kalathor shun its shadowed wood. Once, the hunters of the Grasping Claw braved the borders of the elven wood in the hopes of gathering a few *Sidhe* slaves, but even they no longer venture beneath the forest's eaves.

Some say a strange presence—an elven ghost (if such things are possible)—haunts Zzurk's woods. Those few goblins who live within the province stay well away from the forest and the tunnels beneath the wood. It is said the elf-haunt of Zzurk can move above or below ground at will.

**Important NPCs:** The High Priest of Maglubiyet, Gorren Splittongue, is perhaps the single most powerful goblin in Kal Kalathor, but even he walks on eggshells in the volatile realm. Balancing the rivalries inherent in the goblin pantheon has proved a full-time task for Gorren, and he employs several vassals (priests of three other goblin deities: Bargrivyek, Khurgorbaeyag, and Nomog-Geaya). He even has a henchman devoted to the service of Éla (the Goddess of Thieves has some appeal for goblinkind).

Though he holds more influence throughout the realm than the tribal chieftains, Gorren would be a fool if he did not respect or fear that group. He knows the truth about the Great Khanate and the goblin tribes but publicly plays up the Great Khanate's historic and mythic powers within the realm. He does this to keep the goblin population happy but also to balance the influence of the tribal leaders. The goblins of Kal Kalathor are not a particularly religious lot; given a choice between following the orders of their tribal leaders (as parroted by the Great Khanate) or obeying Gorren's spiritual commands, a majority would probably follow the secular power. The one advantage Gorren Splittongue gains is that nearly all the goblins of Kal Kalathor recognize his not-insubstantial priestly powers. His realm spells have, on occasion, greatly benefited or decimated provinces in the realm.



Perhaps that is why the Sorcerer of Snog, Hogleg Fire-eyes, actively discourages the organized worship of goblin deities by Snogatroi tribesmen. She has successfully campaigned against the Shrine of the Yellow Fang in Snogatroi and a few neighboring provinces, hoping to dilute Gorren's power. The strategy has worked so far. The Sorcerer of Snog commands at least as much fear and respect as the goblin temple regent, and her magical power backs up her position—as well as her influence with the populous Snogatroi tribe. Unlike other goblin tribes, the Snogatroi allow goblins and hobgoblins to join their clans as something other than low-ranked workers or slaves. If a goblin, exiled or shunned by his old tribe, were to retreat into Snogatroi territory, he would need only to bring a few hundred gold pieces or some substantial trade goods with him. The tribe would welcome him with open arms and adopt him into its fold.

This practice angers many other goblin tribal leaders and regents, especially Korgul Ironwhip (MG; F6/T7; Ma, minor, 13; LE) of the Muckraker Guild and Foreg Elfhands (MG; T9; Re, major, 23; NE) of the Grasping Claw. These two guildmasters work together as much as any ambitious goblins ever do. From different tribes and even different goblin races (Foreg is a hobgoblin), they enjoy a partnership of mutual profit. Foreg captures,

breaks, and trades slaves while Korgul masters them and chains them to the land. They provide each other with valuable services and trade goods and dislike the fact that Hogleg seems to need neither from them. With her "open province" (for a price) policy, she extends her protection to include escaped slaves and outlaws who would be slaves—as long as they can steal the required fee or prove themselves worthwhile servants. Privately, the two guildmasters have vowed to bring down Hogleg Fire-eyes when they can, but both fear her power. The fact that she has allowed the Muckrakers to run a swamp farm in Snogatroi (providing the goblin market of Kal-Murthan with several of its most outstanding herbs and exotic foods) has bred a little dissent between the two guildmasters.

**DM's Secrets:** A dangerous realm full of unpredictable humanoids, Kal Kalathor can be a land of adventure for the strong, cunning hero. A hero-king who rides against the goblins, even at the head of an army, is likely to meet defeat before he ever sees the foe, but a clever, scruple-free hero might find the goblin realm worth visiting.

♦ Rumors tell that Terrorknife, the human assassin who helped bring the Great Khanate to power, never left. Not satisfied with humiliating Krag Murfang and escaping the





Khanate's clutches, Terrorknife may be poking around the realm looking to weaken its hierarchy even more. He may have offered his services to one or more of the less-influential goblin chieftains and could be planning to kill the Great Khanate's Council, chieftain by chieftain and shaman by shaman, until chaos ensues.

While most heroes hardly care whether Kal Kalathor remains stable, it should be noted that, with the exception of the recent invasion of Molochev and the occasional raid into neighboring lands, the large goblin realm has remained amazingly neutral over the last several centuries. If tribal chiefs start turning up dead at the hands of a human assassin, the survivors could go on a rampage, leading their warriors against any and all neighboring nations.

- ◆ The Goblin Market has become somewhat famous (and infamous) throughout the region as the place to acquire anything (or anybody). Goblin thieves offer their services openly at the market and can be hired to perform their trade in any nearby realm. Items from Brechtür, Vosgaard, and the Khinasi lands appear in Kal-Murthan on a regular basis and even treasures from far-away Anuire and Rjurik can be acquired by the careful shopper.

Recently, a Khinasi noblewoman and her entourage disappeared while traveling through northern Kozlovnyy. It was thought that raiders from Molochev or rebellious factions in the "civilized" Vos realms disposed of them, but rumor has it that the entourage survives and its members will be auctioned off at the Goblin Market. The Tsar of Kozlovnyy, eager to gain the nobles' freedom, has offered 10,000 gp to anyone willing and able to go to Kal-Murthan and free the prisoners before they are sold to goblins or evil Vos slavers.

This will pose no small problem. While travelers may make their way to Kal-Murthan for the Goblin Market (as long as they pay the "tolls" necessary to travel across the realm), the noblewoman herself will probably go for at least five or six gold bars or the equivalent. The heroes may have to engineer an escape or exercise some other option if they are to free her and her courtiers.

- ◆ In an unusual effort to pacify his human neighbors, the Great Khanate has offered a deal to the Tsar of Molochev. He will send three units of goblin infantry to serve in Molochev's army for two years (the Great Khanate will pay the maintenance costs). In exchange, Molochev will cede possession of Kurmansk and Zuluk to the goblins but the tsar will be allowed to keep his law holdings in those provinces.

It seems, on the surface, unlikely that the tsar will accept these terms. But he may negotiate. The Great Khanate, at the very minimum, wants to gain Kurmansk, and does not mind spending a few goblin lives on the project. The tsar, on the other hand, might be willing to cede control of the province(s) for now then decimate them later when he builds up his magical power. In the meantime, he would gain the service of three goblin military units.

This could give Molochev some interesting options. If goblin raiders attacked Kozlovnyy, Berhagen, Rheulgard, or even Innishiere, how could the tsar's fellow regents blame him? Even if the goblins came out of Molochev's territory and attacked its enemies, the tsar could claim that his forces tried to stop them but were surprised. Tsar Drago could use these forces to raid and weaken his neighbors and test their defenses with little risk to himself.





# sword rust tribes

Perhaps the only realm of orogs on Cerilia, the area known as the domain of the Sword Rust Tribes has had a short and colorful history. Perhaps challenged by the brutal nature of Vosgaard and the Vos themselves, small tribes of orogs in the Orlenaskyy Mountains have banded together rather than fight each other for supremacy (as usually happens), and have hewn a small realm from the wild lands of northern Vosgaard. Whether the Sword Rust Tribes can maintain their unity remains to be seen.

**Alignment:** Chaotic evil.

**Provinces/Holdings:** The orogs of the Sword Rust Tribes care little for politics, economics, or trade. Their realm structure is primitive, at best, and their warrior nature remains their most important commodity. Unlike other large collections of orogs, however, they have managed to create and sustain a basic government for more than a few years.

Banding together against the growing human and humanoid populations around the Orlenaskyy Mountains, the three Sword Rust Tribes of orogs have managed to subjugate or drive out most of their enemies in the center of the northern mountain range.

- ◆ **Law:** The venerable orog warrior Tolzimkur (MOrog; F12; Vo, great, 12; LE) rules all the law holdings belonging to the Sword Rust Tribes but does so through his tribal chieftains. These vassals remain uncharacteristically loyal to Tolzimkur; he has faced only two serious challenges to his rule in the last three years.

- ◆ **Temples:** No one knows the name of the deity the orogs of Cerilia worship and they will not reveal it. All across the land, nearly all orogs practice their secretive religion, and in the Orlenaskyy Mountains stands one of their few established temples. The Last Scream of Orlenaskyy holds sway over most orogs of all three Sword Rust Tribes.
- ◆ **Guilds:** While small groups of orogs have been known to trade with each other and their nonorog neighbors, no established trade guilds exist within the Sword Rust Tribes.
- ◆ **Sources:** Near her home in the Grovnekevic Forest, no one is surprised that Firosk Slecktra (FE; W17; An, great, 35; CN) has control of all sources in the realm. She often uses realm magic to make life difficult for Tolzimkur's orogs, but he has begun to strike back by polluting or destroying her source manifestations.
- ◆ **Provinces:** Though he allows his three tribal chieftains to rule the law holdings of the Sword Rust Tribes, Tolzimkur rules the land.

Province	Law	Temples	Guilds	Sources
Blackspire (2/7)	To (1)	LS (1)	-	FS (7)
Bloodclaw (2/7)	To (1)	LS (1)	-	FS (7)
Redfoot (3/6)	To (3)	LS (1)	-	FS (3)

**Abbreviations:** To=Tolzimkur (Orog Chieftain); LS=The Last Scream (Oneg Skuhlzek); FS=Firosk Slecktra ("Fell Speaker")

**Regent:** Orogos have inhabited the Orlenaskyy Mountains for centuries. Once, the range was thick with them and their small warrior tribes made the mountains all but impassable. But then the Vos came and drove them out of the foothills. Then the Raven came, offering employment at first and slavery later. They retreated into small dens and isolated fortresses deep inside the mountains, unable to strike back at their tormentors.

Then came Tolzimkur. A young orog of the Redfoot tribe, Tolzimkur passed his warriors' initiation tests (which usually involve fighting single-handed against groups of unarmed slaves or a captured adventurer or two) by slaying a Vos scion and somehow stealing her remarkable bloodline. A few months later, after leading daring and successful forays against the Vos warriors of Velenoye, Tolzimkur increased his bloodline again by killing a cousin of the former human regent. He became chieftain of the Redfoot tribe soon after.

Then the Pitchblack orogs attacked the



Redfoots, as happened often in those days (the orogs of the Orlenaskyy's raided each other nearly as often as their Vos and goblin neighbors). Bloody and brutal, the raids helped each tribe solidify its territorial borders and kept the populations of the clans low and of little threat to nonorog neighbors.

Tolzimkur decided one day that this had gone on long enough.

The Redfoot orogs successfully defended their territory against the Pitchblack tribe and then counterattacked. They did not raid their neighbors, however—they *exterminated* them. At great cost to his own warriors, Tolzimkur managed to kill every Pitchblack warrior, priest, and cub. Then, before his tribe could be attacked by the two remaining nearby orog bands, he single-handedly slew the chieftains of the Bloodclaw and Blackspire orogs. His long, two-handed scimitar grew rusty with all the blood it drank—or so the orogs say. Tolzimkur then allied himself with the Temple of the Last Scream and appointed two new chieftains for the two surviving tribes. He made himself regent and bonded them to him as vassals. Tolzimkur has ruled the Sword Rust Tribes ever since.

◆ **Strengths:** Amazingly resilient and long-lived for an orog, old Tolzimkur seems to be only reaching his prime as regent. In the first few years of his reign, he faced several challenges to his rule (both direct and indirect) and now, it appears, most of his orog followers are content to follow his direction. They obey his orders unquestioningly.

Aside from his great personal strength and apparent charisma, Tolzimkur seems blessed by his unnamed orog god. As an orog leader, Tolzimkur must still, on occasion, lead raids against his tribes' enemies. Despite the best efforts of many Vos and goblin warriors and even a few magicians and wizards, Tolzimkur has returned from nearly all of these forays completely unscratched. His long, dark hair is now streaked with gray and his fangs have yellowed with age, but no sane orog—and only a few Vos warriors—dares to challenge him in battle.

◆ **Weaknesses:** Tolzimkur's only weakness stems from the nature of his people. Orog breed slowly (compared to goblins and gnolls, Cerilia's most prolific humanoids) and they fight continually. Even under Tolzimkur's rule, his warriors need to prove themselves in battle against their own kind. Though Tolzimkur has outlawed bloodsport among the Sword Rust Tribes (except between outlaws or against captured enemies), fights still arise occasionally. As a result, the

population of the Sword Rust Tribes grows slowly and Tolzimkur cannot hope to expand his realm quickly.

◆ **Lieutenants:** Soon after acquiring the regency of the Sword Rust Tribes, Tolzimkur stepped down as chieftain of the Redfoot orogs. His successor, along with the chieftains of the Blackspire and Bloodclaw orogs, became his lieutenants. Many have perished during Tolzimkur's rule, but he sees to it that an orderly succession results. Currently, Zeftreg Varlshand (MOrog; F5; LE) of the Blackspire tribe, Korzur (MOrog; T9; Ba, minor, 14; NE) of the Hooked Claw, and Negra Redfoot (FOrog; F6; Vo, great, 4; LE), Tolzimkur's granddaughter, serve as Tolzimkur's lieutenants. Each represents his or her tribe in council and rules the law of the province in the chief's name.

◆ **Current Plans:** As much as he would like to, Tolzimkur cannot count on expanding his realm any further. If possible, he will try to keep the Raiders of Velenoye on their side of the Orlenaskyy Mountains while disrupting Firosk Slecktra's sources as much as possible. If he can do this and rule his provinces to maximum levels, he may be able to build an army that could conquer more land.





**Military:** Every orog, with the exception of children and a few revered elders, can fight. Tolzimkur maintains the following standing army:

- ◆ 2 units of orog infantry
- ◆ 2 units of orog pikes
- ◆ 2 units of orog lizard riders

Because of Tolzimkur's status as the head of the Sword Rust Tribes and because of orog nature, these units need to be paid only half their normal maintenance, and more can be recruited at half the usual mustering cost. Also, if the Sword Rust Tribes are invaded, "civilian" orogs can immediately be added to any army already within a province. For every level of a province, Tolzimkur may add one orog infantry unit to defend the area. If any of these "extra" units are destroyed in battle, the province level drops by one after the War Move for every extra unit lost.

The Lizard Rider units of the Sword Rust Tribes rival the Vos varsk riders for sheer ferocity and intimidation value. Seldom quartered in any province other than Redfoot, these units can be quickly dispatched to either of the other provinces by way of the orog tunnel system or even sent over or under the mountains into Velenoye for special raids.

**Realm Description:** Living mostly underground or in caves along the Orlenaskyy Mountains, the orogs show little of their small realm to the outside world. If the orogs permitted it, a traveler able to scale the Orlenaskyy could pass through Blackspire or Bloodclaw without seeing any sign of habitation. In Redfoot, the most populated of the three Sword Rust provinces, the orogs have begun to live above ground in small, wattled huts under the eaves of the Grovnekevic Forest.

The realm appears completely wild, and for most purposes, it is. The "fortresses" of the orogs are actually large, natural caverns deep inside the mountain range. The orogs carve tunnels only to provide secret entrances and exits to these giant caves.

Orogs prefer living underground and do not see the need to cut paths in the stone as an obstacle to life below.

The Sword Rust orogs enjoy forging iron and steel and make some of the most effective armor and weapons of any humanoid race. Often

better armed and armored than their Vos counterparts, the Sword Rust Tribes can hold their own when fighting in the frozen mountains.

**Important Sites:** A few important secret sites exist in the Sword Rust Tribes' realm, but only if the orogs have not found them first.

◆ **Capital:** Redfoot is home to nearly as many orogs as the other two provinces combined. The least mountainous of the provinces, the inhabitants have begun living outside the caves and caverns of the Orlenaskyy. Tolzimkur, eager to encourage expansion, has moved the Tribes' capital away from the mountains and into the forest. Tolzimgrad, as this small city (more like a fortified village) is called, is the largest above ground settlement of orogs on Cerilia.

Built under the trees of the southern Grovnekevic Forest, this orog keep may look extremely primitive (even to a Vos tribesman), but it serves its purpose. A wooden, spiked wall surrounded by deep, covered trenches surrounds the village, and the heavy eaves of the Grovnekevic woods overshadow all. Despite this protection, only slaves can usually be seen moving around the village during the daytime. No matter how charismatic their leader, the orogs of Redfoot have no desire to venture outdoors while the sun shines. Fortunately for the orogs, bright sunshine seldom appears over northern Vosgaard for more than a few hours at a time.

◆ **Site:** The Slivered Cavern of the Bloodclaw orogs serves as a striking point for the Sword Rust Tribes into either Lutkhovsky or Velenoye. Once, the Slivered Cavern (named because of its composition—much of the rock floor of the Slivered Cavern is slate) housed a vast number of goblin and hobgoblin slaves. Most of these escaped into Lutkhovsky a few years ago, led by their new regent, a goblin named Sorid Vorskrider (MG; F5; Br, major, 34; LE). Now, the two hidden entrances to the Slivered Cavern look out onto Bloodclaw Pass, a narrow, winding path that leads between Velenoye and Lutkhovsky. Periodically, either the Surzek Goblins or Velenoye's Raiders try to shut down or collapse the pass, but the orogs keep it open, using it to strike at either side of the mountains to shattering effect.



◆ **Site:** The Orlenaskyy Mountains gained their name from a legendary Vos hero named Orl who slew a dragon in its lair but perished in the attempt. The dragon's cavern, it is said, collapsed near the end of the struggle, burying the dragon, Orl, and the dragon's treasure all together. "Orl's Home," then, not only refers to the Orlenaskyy Mountains, but to this specific cavern.

No one knows exactly where Orl's Home lies, but rumors have circulated throughout the neighboring realms. Some say it lies deep beneath the highest mountain in Blackspire province, while others believe it could be buried beneath the Ruined Mountain of Bloodclaw. It could simply be a legendary site, but the lure of the dragon's treasure (not to mention the weapons and armor of Orl, which stood up to the best of the dragon's blows) has brought many adventurers to their doom.

**Important NPCs:** As in Vos society, orog priests fulfill a vital role. In many tribes, orog shamans give orders and the warriors obey. This may not be the case in Tolzimkur's realm, but Oneg Skuhlzek (*MOrog; Pr8; Az, minor, 14; NE*), Shaman Terminus (translated) of the Last Scream, still wields considerable influence.

No one knows the exact nature of the deity worshiped or the religion practiced by the

orogs of Cerilia, and most humans think themselves blessed by their ignorance. That the orogs espouse a particularly fatalistic philosophy is obvious; their entire religious heirarchy seems based not on an increase in prestige but a closeness to death. The Shaman Terminus is selected most often because he or she has cheated death many times but has suffered in the experience. Orog shamans of the Last Scream do not flinch from battle, wounds, or even death—they welcome these sensations and revel in them.

Oneg Skuhlzek is no exception. He gained his name when he bit off the head of an ice borer that had locked onto his arm (suffering many burns when the creature's bloodsac exploded). He lost half his left hand putting down the Surzek Goblin rebellion and barely survived the loss of an eye in battle with the varsk riders of Velenoye. A varsk, it is told, had Oneg's head in his mouth for nearly a minute before the orog shaman managed to strangle the creature with his bare hands.

But the wound Oneg is most known for came at the hands—so to speak—of Firosk Slecktra. Leading an expedition to destroy one of the Fell Speaker's many source manifestations (a giant, gnarled tree), Oneg used his priestly magic to determine that the tree was protected by some sort of fire spell. Rather than send one of his slaves forward or even one





of his faithful warriors, Oneg Skuhlzek braced the magics of the Fell Speaker himself and was nearly burned to death. But Oneg survived, his skin permanently blistered, and earned the title of Shaman Terminus within the year.

Oneg has earned the respect of the Sword Rust Tribes and, as importantly, of Tolzimkur. The two are well on their way to establishing an infamous reputation throughout Vosgaard.

**DM's Secrets:** Secretive by nature, the orogs of the Sword Rust Tribes reveal nothing willingly to their foes. Adventuring within the realm is fraught with peril but could be necessary for the hero-king wishing to forge an empire among the frozen wastes.

◆ Orl's Home has been found, or so the wild rumors say. All over Rovninodensk, Velenoye, and even tiny Melyy and faraway Molochev, Vos warriors stare in disbelief when they hear that the hero of the Orlenaskyy Mountains has been found, and they shudder with rage when they learn the circumstances: The orogs of the Sword Rust Tribes unearthed Orl's Home.

If the stories are true, the Blackspire orogs were carving a new passage between a high watch-peak and a major hall when the passage collapsed. Dozens of human and goblin slaves died in the cave-in and the survivors spent the better part of the winter trying to dig the passage out. When they completed their work, the leader of the Blackspire tribe was presented with a gift: the *helm of Orl*, supposedly found at the cave-in.

According to legend, the *helm of Orl* renders its wearer completely immune to the damage caused by fire and electrical spells such as *fireball*, *flame strike*, and *lightning bolt*. It does not prevent damage caused by normal means or from breath weapons (the *armor of Orl* supposedly did that), but the helm could prove invaluable in fighting evil wizards like Firosk Slecktra.

Since this discovery, the orogs of Blackspire have, according to rumor, been digging away at the passage, hoping to find the last resting place of Orl. Vos heroes all across the land are talking of forming some sort of expedition to beat the Sword Rust Tribes to their goal, but it may already be too late.

◆ Having established himself as a "regent of destiny" among the Sword Rust Tribes, Tolzimkur can afford to relax a little—or can he? Two of his lieutenants, one of them his own granddaughter, may be conspiring to replace their leader and take over the realm. Negra Redfoot and Korzur of the Hooked Claw think they can run the realm better than the Sword Rust chieftain, and have conspired to prove it.

Korzur, a thief by nature, wants to establish a guild holding to trade slaves with the Surzek goblins. Tolzimkur, still smarting from the goblins' rebellion and subsequent escape, has forbidden this. Angered by this out-of-hand dismissal, Korzur nevertheless dissembled and began to flatter and cajol Negra into thoughts of rebellion. He points out that, according to orog custom, the young and strong should rule. Tolzimkur, Korzur says, should give up his throne to Negra and "retire" (a foreign concept to most orogs, but Korzur has explained the idea to Negra). Eager for personal power, Negra has gone along with Korzur's preliminary plans (which include amassing a small war chest and negotiating with a few of the Surzek goblins), but she needs encouragement before she goes further. If Negra and Korzur do attempt a coup, they could fracture the Sword Rust Tribes' unity and give the neighboring realms a chance to destroy the orog alliance.



# the manticore's domain

Until about a year ago, few people considered the Manticore (MAw; F14; Az, minor, 31; LE) more than a crazed awnshegh bent on the destruction of yet another realm. Now, it appears the ex-paladin turned awnshegh has begun to grasp power in the domain that bears his name.

**Alignment:** Neutral good.

**Provinces/Holdings:** Detailed fully in the *Blood Enemies: Abominations of Cerilia* sourcebook, the Manticore's domain contains one of the most enigmatic of Cerilia's awnsheghliens. As the description below shows, many changes have occurred in the Manticore's domain in the last year.

As anyone familiar with the Manticore's sad history knows, Qandar came to southern Vosgaard and transformed into an awnshegh because of his lack of faith and the machinations of the Magian. He had the opportunity to become regent of a small domain despite his hideous appearance, but chose to wallow in self-pity instead. Now, tired of taking the blame for all the evil happening around him, the Manticore has finally chosen to recognize his birthright and take control of the land around him.

Province	Law	Temples	Guilds	Sources
Arrowsmith (1/4)	Y (0) Ma (1)	TCV (1)	Or (1)	Y (2)
Madrik (1/4)	Ma (1)	TCV (1)	Or (1)	Y (1)
Morrins (4/3)	Y (4)	TCV (3)	Y (2)	Y (3)
Okati (1/4)	Y (1)	TCV (1)	-	Y (1)

**Abbreviations:** Y=Y'urre; TCV=One True Church of Vosgaard (Petrov Dliniskar); Or=Order of the Moon (Darec Guinsky); Ma=The Manticore

- ◆ **Law:** The evil wizard Y'urre (MV; W8; Az, major, 17; NE) controls most of the law within the realm, but the Manticore is challenging him.
- ◆ **Temples:** Another order of the One True Church of Vosgaard exists within the Manticore's domain. Its regent, the venerable Petrov Dliniskar (MV; Pr8, Belinik; Re, minor, 14; CE) refuses to take sides in the Manticore vs. Y'urre battle. His church has suffered for it.
- ◆ **Guilds:** Y'urre controls a few trade guilds in the land, selling herbs and a few rare magi-

cal components to those who will pay his prices, but the Order of the Moon guild has begun to expand its influence within the land.

- ◆ **Sources:** Once, Y'urre contented himself with destroying any wizard daring enough to enter the Manticore's Domain, but he has spent the last year building up his own power, including creating several source holdings.
- ◆ **Provinces:** Y'urre once secretly ruled all the provinces of the realm but now controls only Morrins, the capital. The Manticore rules Madrik. Both Arrowsmith and Okati remain uncontrolled.

**Regent:** Two contenders for overall regency exist in the Manticore's Domain: the Manticore and the wizard Y'urre (pronounced ee-OOR-ee). The wizard has lost much of his influence but still has the most resources in the land.

Y'urre, one of only a few successful Vos wizards, learned to dissemble at an early age. Learning magic where and when he could, Y'urre disguised his powers from his own kindred, fearing (rightly) that they would turn him over to the temple's mercies if they caught him experimenting with true magic. Y'urre traveled occasionally in the southlands, where magical ability is revered instead of feared, and his quick mind grasped complicated processes inconceivable to most others.

By the time Y'urre married N'chel (FV; T6; Vo, tainted, 6; NE), he had risen in rank until only eight persons seemed to stand between him and rulership of the domain. With his wife's help, he managed to eliminate much of his competition and become the heir-apparent just as the Manticore arrived. Publicly, he blames the Manticore for robbing him of his right to rulership, but privately, he thanks the gods for sending Qandar to the land when they did.

Until recently, Y'urre carefully manipulated the Manticore and secretly ruled the land, using fear of the awnshegh as a club against his rivals. He played upon Qandar's morose and self-destructive nature, sending occasional armies against him both to stir the Manticore to action and to prove to the realm's subjects that they needed Y'urre to protect them from the abomination.



But Qandar the Manticore grew wise. This became apparent when he captured Darec Guinsky (*MHlf*; *T10*; *Br, minor, 15*; *N*) after Y'urre tricked the regent of the Order of the Moon into the Manticore's clutches. Instead of killing the halfling bandit, Qandar questioned him instead, showing for the first time in years an interest in the land outside his lair. Hearing Darec's tales and knowing something of Y'urre's nature, the Manticore quickly pieced together the puzzle and realized that Y'urre, his supposed ally, was using him as a bogeyman against a terrified peasant populace.

Whether something decent remains in the Manticore's twisted heart or he simply feels a need for bloody vengeance, Qandar has decided to make Y'urre pay for his treachery. He made a deal with Darec, convincing the halfling to part with his single law holding (transferring it to the Manticore). Then, as Y'urre tried to strengthen his hold on the magic of the land, the two reduced many of the wizard's other holdings.

- ◆ **Strengths:** Y'urre has his magical powers, his natural cunning, and his wife's thief abilities to fall back on. He also has the rumors and legends of many years to scare people away from supporting the Manticore, and he has the innocuous image of a courtier to deflect many would-be rivals. Even though his secrets have begun to unravel, Y'urre remains a master tale-spinner and could come out of this struggle on top.

Aside from his impressive natural abilities and warrior's knowledge, the Manticore has little going for him. Life under Y'urre's rule has not been good for most people in the Manticore's domain, but few believe Qandar offers anything better. Fighting an uphill battle against his falsely-earned evil reputation, the Manticore will have to impress the Vos of the region before they will flock to his banner.

- ◆ **Weaknesses:** If it becomes public knowledge that Y'urre is a practitioner of true magic, the loyalty of the realm and his troops will fall immediately. Already a less-than-inspiring figure (Y'urre has cultivated the image of a coward and an in-between man for so long that he'll never get rid of it), the only reason he can manipulate the warriors of the realm is because they believe he speaks for a stronger, more impressive leader.

Aside from the obvious, the Manticore has only one major weakness: his own nihilistic perspective. When the desire for vengeance against Y'urre burns away, what will he be left with? His sometime ally, Darec, does his best to cheer the Manticore and prompt him to action, but Qandar has spent so much time alone and engaging in self-loathing that he may not be able to maintain his focus for long.

- ◆ **Lieutenants:** Y'urre's only lieutenant is his wife, N'chel. She often rules or speaks in his stead. When he departed to create source holdings, she oversaw the management of the realm. Since that time period coincided with the Manticore's rise from inactivity and his attack on Y'urre's holdings, she has a less than stellar record as substitute regent.

While the Manticore seems to have allied himself with Darec, he has no lieutenants and he needs one badly. Even those who look to Qandar as regent fear his awnshegh nature greatly and the Manticore can go only so far without a human or humanoid representative.

- ◆ **Current Plans:** Y'urre does not recognize the Manticore as much of a threat. Already, he has begun to talk up "the creature's" recent actions as the plot of some usurper trying to bring down what remains of the nobility of the land. Since this rumor parallels Y'urre's own activities of years past, it is easy to make these tales sound believable, and Y'urre hopes he'll be able to crush support for the Manticore without lifting a military or magical finger.

Kill Y'urre. The Manticore's planning goes no further than that. If he could challenge the wizard to single combat and end it there, he would do so, but Qandar knows from experience that Y'urre would never agree to such a thing. At Darec's prompting, he has begun to raise support among those persecuted by Y'urre and he hopes that this bid for regency won't last long. The Manticore sees rulership as a means to an end, nothing more.



**Military:** Y'urre, through intermediaries, still controls most of the military might in the Manticore's domain. Much of his army died or dispersed after a recent battle with the Manticore, but a few loyal troops remain:

- ◆ 3 units of Vos infantry
- ◆ 1 unit of Vos scouts

Using the Manticore's name but his own resources, Darec has managed to muster two units of mercenary irregulars in hope of defending their holdings from military attack.

**Realm Description:** A small realm carved out by the fear most Vos have of the terrible awnshegh, the Manticore's domain survives as a buffer state between the Raven and Velenoye.

- ◆ **Capital:** Since the rift manifested between Y'urre and the Manticore, the awnshegh has ceased visiting the capital city of Morrins and remains in Madrik. Y'urre has stationed one of his remaining infantry units in the capital city (which lies at the western edge of the province of the same name) to defend it in case the Manticore attacks, and to keep a watch on the worried populace. A small city, the capital of the realm could not survive a mass exodus. "The Manticore's Lair," the part of the city once frequented by the awnshegh, appears abandoned.
- ◆ **Site:** The modest forest of Madrik province once housed a small army with orders to watch the Manticore and attack him occasionally (as part of Y'urre's plan for manipulating the awnshegh and the people of the realm), but it has recently been turned into the Manticore's forest court. Darec the guildmaster runs a small, open-air town amid the trees and the Manticore visits occasionally (when he is sure he can contain his madness and hunger) in an attempt to inspire his few existing forces.
- ◆ **Site:** The Blood of Belinik Cathedral, located in central Morrins, was once one of the largest shrines to the war god in Vosgaard. Time and the tempestuous nature of the realm have destroyed much of its grandeur, but the somewhat dilapidated church remains holy to all orders of the One True Church of Vosgaard. The temple regent, the venerable Petrov Dliniskar, wrestles daily with his loyalties—he dislikes the slimy, cowardly Y'urre and will not throw the temple's full weight behind the "councilor to the realm," but he finds it difficult to support a monster as regent.

As a result, both factions have, occasionally, pillaged the temple for funds and supplies, leaving the Cathedral in its current state. Dliniskar must do something soon if

he does not want the One True Church of Vosgaard in the Manticore's Domain to become a disgrace to its patron.

**Important NPCs:** The province of Arrowsmith still conceals the existence of Morita Greenfingers (*F1/2E; W7; CG*), a half-elven herbalist and wizard with an uncanny talent for growing and harvesting plants. Some say she has a latent bloodline, while others believe she's simply blessed by the gods. Since Morita takes after her father, an elf of Cwmb Bheinn, that seems unlikely.

Morita appeared in the Manticore's domain just after Qandar. She has helped those peasants who've suffered from the Manticore's (and Y'urre's) predations in the realm, but she has not taken an active hand in the politics of the realm one way or another. Some say she, like Y'urre, has established an herb trade with people outside the Manticore's realm, perhaps working through Darec. Few have ever seen the ruddy-faced, brown-haired elf personally, however, and those who receive her services seem unwilling—or perhaps unable—to reveal her exact whereabouts in Arrowsmith.

**DM's Secrets:** Over the last few years, all of Y'urre's plans have begun crashing down around him. His "pet awnshegh" has awoken from his self-destructive stupor and sworn vengeance on the wizard. His only allies seem far away and unwilling to commit tangible aid. His people, constantly frightened by his own tales and rumors of the Manticore's ferocity, have lost the courage to defend the land from Qandar. Y'urre seems ready to stew in his own juice. But the scheming wizard has not given up. He has several plans for the realm.

- ◆ Two of Y'urre's most powerful allies are the Magian and the White Witch. Even before Y'urre came to power, he supplied them with magical herbs and components they needed for their most exotic and powerful spells. It is possible Y'urre supplied the Magian with the components he needed to cast his *bloodline corruption* spell (detailed in *Blood Enemies*) on Qandar. Y'urre is calling in old debts. Within a few weeks, awnshegh-hunters and powerful assassins may show up in the Manticore's domain, hunting for the awnshegh's blood. They



will not care who gets in the way of their quest and may choose to begin by eliminating the Manticore's support network, starting with the forest town of Madrik and Darec's guilders.

- ◆ Y'urre may have convinced the Magian to enchant a small, white wand (made from the thigh bone of a former wizard of Ruornil, it is said) with a few charges of the *bloodline corruption* spell and deliver the item to Y'urre through intermediaries. If this is true, the wizard of the Manticore's Domain may have the power to completely corrupt or destroy a few of the most powerful heroes in the area. If this is true, the *bone wand* must be wrested away at any cost.
- ◆ Recent rumors speak of an alliance between the Raven and the Manticore. While no such alliance currently exists, Y'urre

would love nothing more than the Raven's support. If things go sour for the wizard, he may attempt to bargain with the Raven, offering the Manticore's bloodline as a price for saving Y'urre from the collapse of his own plans.

Like most of Vosgaard, the Raven was duped by Y'urre's deceit; he believes that the savage Manticore rules the realm on his northern border and has been content to expand southward and eastward until now. If he learns that a mere mortal wizard stands in his way of the north, the Raven may simply annex the Manticore's domain and worry about Qandar's reaction later. If Y'urre faces defeat in his war to reestablish control of the land, he must not be allowed to communicate with the Raven or the realm will truly be lost.





# the raven's realm (ust atka)

**U**st Atka has labored under the Raven's (MAw; F17/W14; Azrai, true, 77; LE) rule for ten long years, and the awnshagh has yet to face a serious challenge to his rule. Inhabiting the body of Tsar Lenski, former regent of the realm, the Raven has made little secret of his supernatural origins. Without a doubt, his people know they are ruled by an awnshagh, but fear keeps them well in line. **Alignment:** Neutral.

**Provinces/Holdings:** Detailed fully in the *Blood Enemies: Abominations of Cerilia* sourcebook, the Raven's Domain has changed slightly over the past year. Refer to the map on page 38.

After coming to power in Ust Atka, the Raven, in the body of Tsar Lenski, systematically exterminated or subjugated nearly all of the former tsar's allies, enemies, and rivals within the realm. A few managed to flee into neighboring realms, only to be sought out and destroyed by the Raven's personal assassin's guild, the Wing. Now, only a few pockets of resistance to the Raven's rule still exist within Ust Atka and they have little effect on his operations.

◆ **Law:** The Raven controls nearly all the established law holdings in Ust Atka but has made little effort to increase his influence. This has allowed Pietro's Men, a resistance faction, to grab power in a few small areas.

◆ **Temples:** Unimpressed by Cerilia's deities but mindful of the Vos priests' ability to sway a population, the Raven destroyed the One True Church of Vosgaard in Ust Atka (it still survives in Yeninskiy under a new regent) and has built up a puppet church with a puppet regent, the Almighty Temple of Belinik. While its priests are actual priests of Belinik, they take all their orders from the Raven.

◆ **Guilds:** The Raven established the Wing as an assassin/spy guild soon after he assumed the throne of Ust Atka. He still uses the guild as a source of information and as a tool for assassination and intrigue, but he has also put its resources to use for trade

purposes. Surprisingly, the Raven trades quite often with neighboring realms (most often the Manticore's domain, Kal Kalathor, and Rovninodensk), selling food in exchange for ore and other supplies. But the Raven pays little attention to his realm's trade; the Hunters, a bandit guild, have survived by preying on the Wing's trade (but not too often), and even Pietro's Men have raised gold for their cause through a small guild.

◆ **Sources:** All provinces in the Raven's domain contain source holdings of some level for his use. He maintains an elaborate (and expensive) ley line network throughout the realm as well, so that his powers cannot be easily diminished.

◆ **Provinces:** The Raven rules all the provinces of Ust Atka through his lieutenants.

Province	Law	Temples	Guilds	Sources
Akar Bluffs (3/3)	-	Bnk (1)	Na (1)	Rv (3)
Angar (3/2)	Rv (3)	Bnk (2)	W (3)	Rv (2)
Ayon (3/3)	Gr (2)	Bnk (0)	Gr (1)	Rv (3)
Dmitriya (1/4)	Rv (1)	-	-	Rv (2)
	Gr (0)	-	-	-
Irtysk (2/3)	Rv (2)	-	-	Rv (2)
Kolyma (2/3)	Rv (0)	-	-	Rv (3)
Laptevykh (2/3)	Rv (1)	-	-	Rv (0)
Nikolai (3/4)	Rv (2)	Bnk (1)	-	Rv (0)
Patea (4/2)	Rv (1)	Bnk (1)	W (3)	Rv (0)
Proliv (3/3)	Rv (2)	Bnk (0)	W (3)	Rv (2)
Tommot (0/5)	-	-	-	Rv (5)
Ust Atka (3/4)	Rv (3)	Bnk (2)	-	Rv (1)
Yanskia (5/2)	Rv (4)	Bnk (2)	W (4)	Rv (1)
	Gr (1)	-	-	-
Zaliv (1/7)	Gr (1)	-	-	Rv (6)

**Abbreviations:** Rv=the Raven; Bnk=Almighty Temple of Belinik (Vlad Gruskaya); Gr=Gregori Handl (Pietro's Men); Na=Natalia Geriver (the Hunters); W=the Wing (trade/thieves/assassins' guild)

**Regent:** As regent, the Raven favors the iron-hand-inside-the-steel-gauntlet technique. He brooks no rivals and keeps no advisers. Only his preoccupation with the Shadow World and his desire to conquer more territories keep him from ruling his realm to ultimate limits.





- ◆ **Strengths:** Possessed of extreme personal power, the Raven holds claim to the title "Son of Azrai" and none can wrest it from him. Though few of the wise believe the ancient Lord of Shadow actually sired a child, they cannot dispute the Raven's place among the legendary, infamous Lost. As one of the ancient wizards taught magic personally by Azrai, the Raven has powers unsurpassed on Cerilia—powers he has not yet begun to tap.

The Raven also has a special connection to and understanding of the Shadow World. Trapped there for more than a millenium (with occasional forays back into Cerilia), he has learned many of that realm's secrets. Some fear he commands forces in that dark land. He certainly has a permanent gate to the Shadow World; somewhere in the dark forest of Yanskia is a black tree said to contain a two-way portal to the Shadow World. If the Raven is ever able to summon his shadow armies, he will do so through that tree.

- ◆ **Weaknesses:** The Raven appears to be insecure in his status upon Cerilia. Legend has it that he has come through portals from the Shadow World before only to be banished back again after a short time. To the Raven, ten years is hardly an eyeblink—he worries that some band of heroes or some unlooked-for power will send him screaming back into the land of shadows before he can establish himself permanently on Cerilia.

This insecurity makes the Raven extremely cautious. He plays political games he doesn't quite understand (another weakness: his complete detachment from the human condition) to gain time. What he needs that time for remains a mystery, but he seems unable or unwilling to use his full power for now.

The Raven's final weakness stems from his inhuman nature. More than extraordinarily intelligent, he has completely forgotten his humanity. He cannot perceive the thoughts and feelings of his subjects, followers, or enemies because they are so far below him. He seems to understand this and goes cautiously out of fear that he might "over-think" an enemy's motives; as a result, simple plans seem to work against him while more complex deviousness plays right into his hands.

- ◆ **Lieutenants:** The Raven has seven tsarevo lieutenants, all under the same orders: control his armies, protect his borders, and collect his taxes. None are blooded (the Raven made sure of that), and it is rumored that they are not particularly bright or talented. They were chosen because of their unswerving loyalty and fear of the Raven, and they perform their duties using the terror of their lord's name.

- ◆ **Current Plans:** Most recently, the Raven tried attacking Yeninskiy over the Atka Mountains only to be stymied by the reappearance of Vore Leginiskiy, the dragon of Vstaive Peak. The Raven has not given up his invasion plans, but does not want to test his powers against a Cerilian dragon at this time.

In the *Blood Enemies* sourcebook, the Raven's plan to attack Zoloskaya and Yeninskiy simultaneously was revealed. Unfortunately, with the appearance of the dragon and the unexpected magical might of Zoloskaya, the Raven has had to modify his plans. He wants to annihilate his enemies but husband his strength for some upcoming, secret conflict.

**Military:** While the Raven controls no naval forces, he controls many land-based military units even though many were destroyed in their failed assault on Yeninskiy.

- ◆ 8 units of Vos infantry
- ◆ 4 units of Vos cavalry
- ◆ 2 units of Wing scouts

**Realm Description:** One of the largest and southernmost lands of Vosgaard, Ust Atka once had a pleasant climate (more pleasant than the temperaments of its rulers, anyway) but now suffers under a shadow. Its plains grow wild and unkempt and a marsh has grown seemingly out of nowhere to spoil one of the southern provinces. The coniferous forest in the northwest of the realm has turned evil as well; spies from Rovninodensk and goblin hunters from Kal Kalathor report that horrors previously unknown in Cerilia have taken up residence there and made it a place to fear.

Still, the land produces more than enough food to supply the Raven's armies and he trades the surplus with less-fortunate Vos realms. The awnshegh imports ore and other supplies for his soldiers and appears to be fixated on creating a vast storehouse of weapons, armor, and other gear. Perhaps one of the Raven's earlier bids for power on Cerilia failed for lack of preparation.



**Important Sites:** A large realm, Ust Atka contains many places of interest and danger.

- ◆ **Capital:** When the Raven took power, he built a fortress around the shadow tree in Yanskia and relocated the capital to that dark province. Nearly half of the Raven's vast army lives in or around Zaruktzan (a Vos word meaning "dark keep" that also translates as "shadow gate" in dwarvish).

Many legends surround the newly-constructed fortress. Whispered rumors state that the keep was imported from the Shadow World stone by stone and its walls remain unusually resistant to Cerilian magic. Another tale tells that the former tsarevos and tsarevas of Ust Atka—those who did not jump quickly to the Raven's call—were walled up in magical oubliettes at the corners of the keep and kept alive through the Raven's magics. They can still be heard howling in their mad torment on particularly dark nights.

The final legend is the most frightening. Once, the pine forest around the keep offered good hunting and an excellent source of lumber. Now, emanations from Zaruktzan have polluted the forest; it seems to exist simultaneously in both Cerilia and the Shadow World. The locals, even the Raven's most loyal soldiers, call it *Kurzcathca*, "the cursed wood."

- ◆ **Cities:** Only one true city remains in Ust Atka—and it barely survives. Many people outside the realm still believe Magdagrad to be the Raven's capital; he often uses it as a base of operations. But the Raven has a special hatred (the source of which is unknown) for the former capital and appears there only on his way north to Zaruktzan or when he feels particularly sadistic. Since taking power in Ust Atka, the Raven has systematically pillaged and reduced Magdagrad until it has become a haunted shadow of its former glory.

But all is not lost for the people of Magdagrad. Those who remain are afraid to leave (the Raven enjoys having people there to torment occasionally), but a few have begun to turn against their tormenter. They have joined with Pietro's Men to form a small, secret pocket of resistance in the city, eager to bring about the Raven's downfall. That they can exist right in the heart of the Raven's realm shows how little the regent understands of politics and the nature of mortals.

- ◆ **Site:** Hunter's Peak, on the very northern border of Akar Bluffs, shelters Natalia Geriver (FV; T9; Br, minor, 11; NG) and her small band. They subsist by hunting among

the mountains and into Nikoli's forests and also by occasionally raiding the Raven's armed camps or the Wing's trading caravans. Occasionally, the lieutenant in charge of that area sends out scouts to trap or kill Natalia, but they have failed so badly that he prefers to let the matter lie. Rumor has it that Hunter's Peak contains part of an ancient dwarven settlement and that Natalia and her band could walk through the dwarven tunnels from Akar Bluffs to the Manticore's domain without even coming up for air. Perhaps this is how she avoids the Raven's troops.

- ◆ **Site:** Gregori Handl (MV; R8; Ma, major, 30; NG) has been a thorn in the Raven's side since the beginning of the awnshegh's rule but the Raven doesn't seem to notice. Currently, Gregori's base of operations lies in Ayon, just north of the Atka Mountains, hidden from the small army camp stationed in the north of the province. Dug out of a low hill and hidden from sight by long, wild grass, the Raven's patrols have walked over Handl's headquarters more times than he can count. Currently, Handl uses this southern lair mostly to hide or funnel refugees from Ust Atka—those people who have gotten on the awnshegh's bad side.

**Important NPCs:** Posing as a guard in the service of the army stationed at Ayon, Gregori Handl seems able to assume any guise necessary to escape detection (perhaps a combination of blood abilities, perhaps a knack for disguises). Curiously, the Raven also seems to have a "blind spot" where Gregori (or "Pietro," as he is often called) and his holdings are concerned. The man has slowly established a few refuges in most of Ust Atka's provinces (with the notable exception of the province of Ust Atka and Yanskia, two of the Raven's strongholds) and has even created a few holdings in the area. Supposedly the last surviving tsarevo from before the Raven's takeover, many claim Gregori is actually invisible to the Raven's physical and magical sight.

Natalia Geriver has a less impressive pedigree but still manages to impress those who hear of her. Blooded and tenacious, she has clung to a tiny guild holding in the Akar Bluffs for nearly five years and still refuses to flee over the border or submit to the Raven's lieutenants. Though it may be argued that she is



hardly worth the Raven's consideration, let alone the trouble it would take for him to root her out, she provides a necessary hero for the Vos in Ust Atka. She thumbs her nose at the Raven's lieutenants and has never once come close to being caught. With luck, she hopes to inspire a few more men and women to resist the Raven, whether openly or in their hearts.

The last of the important dissidents in the Raven's domain is Boris Techayav (MV; F1; Vo, major, 30; N), a teenage boy and, oddly enough, follower of Kriesha. Apparently the last son of the Techayav clan (a matriarchal clan devoted to the service of Kriesha), he survived because the Raven had little interest in completely destroying the feeble family. When the One True Church of Vosgaard reigned as the official church of Ust Atka, Kriesha's followers were persecuted, and as the only clan expressly devoted to her worship, the Techayavs were considered peasants and cowards by the other families. Now, Boris burns to redeem the name of his clan and has begun to grow to manhood under the watchful eye of his grandparents. Some say the Raven is amused by the boy's vengeful nature, while others believe the awnshegh simply hasn't noticed him yet.

After killing the former leader of the One True Church in Vosgaard, the Raven established his own temple—the Almighty Temple of Belinik. In mockery of the old order, the Raven corrupted Vlad Gruskaya (MV; Pr4, Belinik; Ma, minor, 1; LE) and established him as the temple's regent. Gruskaya's priests have been appointed by the Raven as well and serve as spies for the awnshegh throughout the realm. The One True Church of Vosgaard relocated, under its new regent, completely into Yeninskiy.

Gruskaya lives in fear of his master. The Raven never leaves him in control of enough regency to cast realm spells (the Raven disdains priestly magic) and cannot show the awnshegh how valuable he could be to the Raven's plans. Part of Vlad knows that he will be destroyed if he ever shows himself as competent, but another part of him fears death at the Raven's hands if he does not do something to distinguish himself. Trying to figure out his master's mood has driven Gruskaya half mad with worry and he desperately longs for some way out of this terrible situation.

**DM's Secrets:** Adventuring in or around the Raven's domain is fraught with difficulties, but heroes can prove their worth by facing one of the most powerful and mysterious awnsheghs on the continent.

◆ Boris Techayav, last son of the Techayav clan, will reach manhood soon. Or, consumed by his desire for revenge, he could be destroyed by the Raven or his operatives at any time. Contrary to his grandparents' wishes, Boris has decided to steal into the Raven's fortress and attempt to kill the awnshegh in hand-to-hand combat.

This could be disastrous for the realm. The boy cannot threaten the Raven even remotely, but could anger him. After drinking Boris's bloodline, the Raven might begin to perceive the small pockets of resistance that exist throughout his land. He may take steps against Pietro's Men, the Hunters, or others who have managed to hide from him this long.

The boy must be stopped before he attempts this mad quest. Hopefully, he can be persuaded and perhaps even recruited by a band of heroes—he is, after all, one of only two surviving nobles of Ust Atka and could someday lead a rebellion against the Raven.

◆ The Wohlken clan in Yeninskiy has heard of the Raven's defeat in the Atka Mountains. They have also heard that the Raven's forces, broken by the dragon of Vstaive Peak, are in disarray and cannot order themselves. The Wohlkens believe now, if ever, is the time to strike against their northern foe.

They have been deceived. While the Raven's forces did suffer a defeat, they were not nearly as diminished as the rumors say. The Wing has spread these rumors in the hope that the Wohlkens will attack across the open plains of Irtysk and head straight toward Magdagrad (which they believe to be the Raven's capital). The Raven's forces will intercept and surround them in Dmitriya and destroy Yeninskiy's proudest defenders. This should leave the Raven's Gap (the province of Aral) undefended; the awnshegh's forces can then attack around the mountains and run rampant over Yeninskiy.

Fortunately, Gregori Handl has heard these rumors and confirmed the Wing's involvement. He has tried to get word to the Wohlkens but the Wing hunts down all his messengers. He needs someone willing and able to defeat the Wing's scouts and assassins and make it to Raven's Gap before the Wohlken army starts marching northward.



# the battle fens

A large, virtually unsettled area in northern Vosgaard (refer to the map on page 49), the Battle Fens has a storied history and an infamous reputation. Protected slightly from the worst of the northern weather by the high trees of the Grovnekevic Forest and the peaks of the Klessberg, most of the Battle Fens remains free of snow for at least three months of the year. But that does not make the land any more attractive to the nearby Vos of Lutkhovsky, Velenoye, or Rovnino-densk.

Legends of the Battle Fens tell of a great war between the Vos of Velenoye (once the preeminent Vos realm in the region) and the elves of Tuar Annwn. Unlike the peoples in the other lands of Cerilia, the humans and elves of Vosgaard never learned to live in any semblance of peace.

Long after the gheallie Sidhe was banned, the elves and humans of Vosgaard battled each other openly, pitting swords and magic against each other time and again.

The last great battle between elves and humans in Vosgaard ended in an area to be known forever as the Battle Fens. As has been summarized in the *Players' Chronicle*, the elves were somehow aided in order to defeat the Vos forces and preserve their realm.

In the process, they laid waste to the Battle Fens. Once nearly covered by the trees of the Grovnekevic Forest, nearly half the land's trees were burned and the land gutted by the ferocity of the battle.

## the modern battle fens

Dark, foreboding, and (some say) haunted by its past, the Battle Fens is seldom visited by elves or men. The region has become a haven for some of the most dangerous creatures of Vosgaard and monsters that may have origins elsewhere. Frozen swamps abut ice-covered moors and uneven steppes. The trees of the Battle Fens echo the land's pain: All seem

twisted as if tortured by the very land that gives them life.

◆ **Provinces/Holdings:** Only two known possible regents exist within the undeveloped "provinces" of the Battle Fens. One, Firosk Slecktra (FE; W17; An, great, 35; CN), certainly controls a significant network of source holdings and may actually rule one or two provinces in the Border'd Wood. The other possible regent is less certain. It is said a druid of Iraikhan may live in the Hidden Grove; if so, she could have a temple holding or rulership in the province. Without any known human population in the Fens, however, this seems unlikely.

**Sites:** Within the land known as the Battle Fens, four significant sites of interest exist.

◆ **The Frozen Swamp:** Sheltered somewhat by the thick trees of the Grovnekevic Forest to the northwest, the Frozen Swamp appears to be the center of all the evil and dark memories preserved by the Fens. It is said that whatever magics the elves used to strike back at the attacking Vos

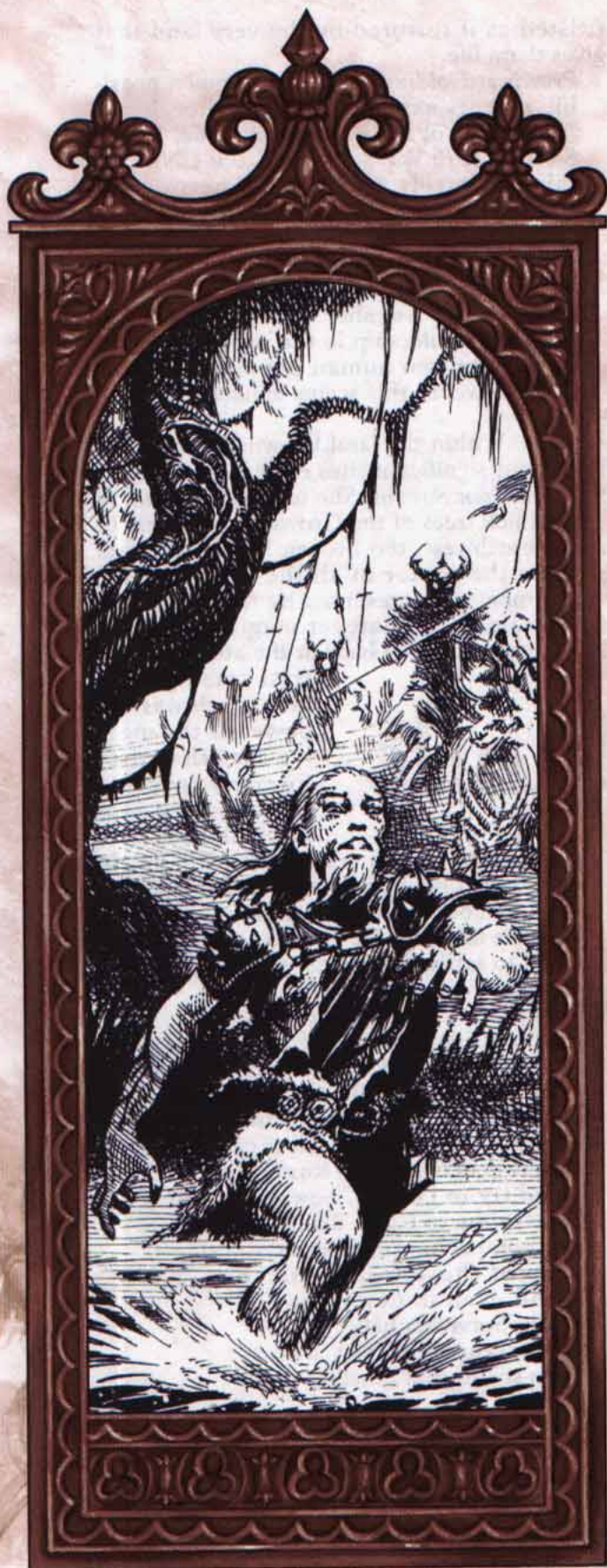
first manifested here. Such was the power of the magics that the trees formerly covering the area burst into flame and the heat

melted the frozen land. When the battle ended, the blood of countless dead elves, men, and other, nameless creatures mingled with the land and the Frozen Swamp has refused to settle. It remains a stinking mire of death and old vengeance.

◆ **The Border'd Wood:** Once a no-mans'-land between Tuar Annwn and Velenoye, the forest between the two realms now has a third interest: the Sword Rust Tribes. Called the Border'd Wood because neither man nor elf walks there without great cause, only the orogs of the Sword Rust Tribes have dared try to tame it. Few enough of them return to Chief Tolzimkur with any comprehensible reports and none of those will revisit the Wood even under threat of death. Survivors believe that the tortured spirits of elven scouts, put cruelly

## part III: the feral lands





to death by Velenoye's armies in the early days of the last battle, still walk the Border'd Wood looking for some way to warn Tuar Annwn of a coming attack that ended centuries ago.

- ◆ *The Ice Steppes:* Uneven and full of pits and crags, the Ice Steppes of the Battle Fens actually seem unending because of their layered, uniform appearance. It is said that hunters who have strayed into the Battle Fens have walked for weeks before finally giving out, never seeing the swamps, forest, or coastline they hoped to follow to safety.

The Ice Steppes do have inhabitants. Skuhlzecki ("ice borers") and remorhaz both hunt there, and the ice giants of northern Cerilia are believed to make their homes in the hidden crags.

- ◆ *The Hidden Grove:* More rumor than geographic fact, the Hidden Grove appears as a province-sized stand of pine woods in the northern center of the Battle Fens. Older Vos trappers and scouts say the Hidden Grove is simply an ice mirage or a cold winter fantasy dreamed up by their youthful counterparts. More than one would-be explorer has lost himself among the Ice Steppes hoping to find refuge in the Hidden Grove.

Legend or not, the Hidden Grove is rumored to have grown into existence only a few decades ago at the direction of some otherworldly power. The religious say a druid of Iraikhan (Erik) entered the Battle Fens at the direction of her god and is making an effort to heal the land from the inside out. Others think the Hidden Grove is some new trap of the Battle Fens—a glimmer of hope that will turn to the cold gleam of ice when finally discovered.

**Important NPCs:** While the Battle Fens remains virtually uninhabited and unexplored, a very few people have visited it and learned a few of its secrets.

The most notable of these is Firosk Slecktra, the mysterious elf wizard of Grovnekevic Forest. Many believe she is responsible not only for the Battle Fens' infamous reputation but for the original devastation caused to this region. If this is true, the elves of Tuar Annwn are not grateful to her, for the Fell Speaker of the Grovnekevic is not welcome in the northern elven realm. She makes her home somewhere in the Border'd Wood, perhaps near Black Hand Lake or among the Jagged Hills.

Over many generations, Firosk Slecktra has gathered source holdings in neighboring Velenoye, the area controlled by the Sword Rust Tribes, and Lutkhovsky. No one knows how



much mebhaighl she has at her disposal, but with the Battle Fens at her back, it must be considerable. Every so often she tests her strength on her unlucky Vos, goblin, or orog neighbors, raining fire, frost, and death upon a province. It is unknown whether she does the same to Tuar Annwn, but surely the elves can defend themselves from her power.

While no living Vos claims to have met Firosk Slecktra, a description of the elf woman has surfaced in recent years. Described as wearing a hood and cloak and seemingly bent with age, she is said to have flawless, pearl-white skin, thin, almost colorless lips, and black eyes. A few Vos believe she has vampiric tendencies and that she could be some new kind of awnshegh. Her long, white-blond hair occasionally slips out from under her hood and gives her an ethereal appearance, blowing about her face when there is no wind or curling up under her chin as if to protect her from the bitter cold.

One of the only scouts willing to venture into the Battle Fens on a regular basis, Morris One-hand (MHlf; T9; Re, minor, 19; NG) of Rovninodensk has been hired by adventurers from all over the world in attempts to penetrate the Battle Fens. Morris cheerfully tells tales of his adventures in the Fens and laughs at legends of vast treasures of magical weapons and supplies lost by elf and Vos armies of the past, but he will never hesitate to lead parties into the land in search of such hordes. Morris has always returned from such ventures. Not all of his clients have been so lucky.

A middle-aged halfling, Morris has taken on the mannerisms and dress of his human neighbors. His long, straight, charcoal hair is worn gathered in a ponytail or wrapped around his neck in a carefully-crafted braid. He prefers to fight with a pair of Vos short swords. No one knows where he was born or how he obtained the surname "One-hand" (he has two), and he proves immovably obstinate when questioned about either subject.

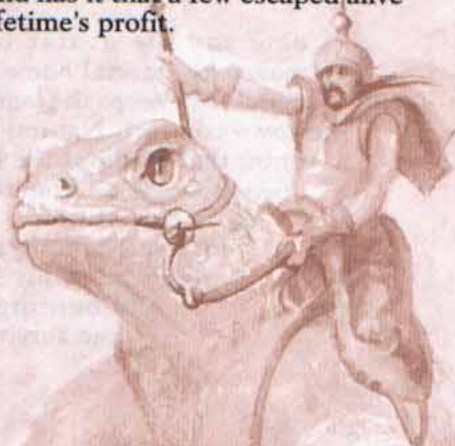
**DM's Tips and Secrets:** Adventures in the Battle Fens should be attempted only by mid- to high-level adventurers and then only for good reason. Elven haunts (a type of banshee) roam the Border'd Wood and the Frozen Swamp and creatures such as the remorhaz and the ice borer make travel among the Ice Steppes nearly impossible. Add to these dangers the magic of Firosk Slecktra (an unpredictable wizard with a huge supply of magical knowledge and power) and you have a deadly combination.

- ◆ *A link to the Shadow World:* As discussed in the section concerning Tuar Annwn (later in

this section), the source of the magical aid that rescued the elves from the Vos derived from the Shadow World. Someone, perhaps Firosk Slecktra or perhaps a combination of elf wizards, broke down the barrier between Cerilia and the Shadow World in Tuar Annwn and the Battle Fens, bringing forth all sorts of terrible monsters and shadowy magical effects that the Vos could not possibly overcome. When the battle ended, these wizards could not fully close the "curtain" again and the Shadow World gained a foothold on Cerilia.

One such foothold exists amid the Ice Steppes. Experienced trackers do not get lost here because of any natural phenomenon; the Shadow World has reached into Cerilia to distort distances in the Ice Steppes, sometimes bending time and space. Only a character with an intimate understanding of both the Shadow World and Vosgaard's heartless wastes could hope to lead a party through this region.

- ◆ *Strange Monsters:* Because of the otherworldly nature of the Battle Fens, arctic and subarctic creatures not normally seen on Cerilia can surface among the Fens. These beasts may make good hunting for the other monstrous inhabitants (or even daring adventurers), but most often they are the hunters.
- ◆ *Legends of the Past:* Rumors are true that weapons, armor, and powerful magics left over from the last elf-Vos battle are preserved within the Frozen Swamp. Guarded by undead and shadow creatures, these items also bear the stigma of that last battle. Many may be more powerful than anything previously found in Cerilia, but many bear curses nearly as powerful, strengthened by the nature of their bearers' deaths. Still, many adventurers have braved the Frozen Swamp and its dangers for these rewards, and legend has it that a few escaped alive with a lifetime's profit.





# the icemarch

**W**ell named by the rare trappers, hunters, and adventurers who have traveled the northernmost land of Vosgaard, frost and snow cover the Icemarch year-round. The Klessberg glacier, which begins in northern Drachenward, encroaches on the Icemarch across its northern coast. Even the southern provinces of the Icemarch, covered by the pines of the Grovnekevic Forest, never escape the Vos winter. Refer to the map on page 49.

The Icemarch has inspired many legends and holds many secrets. Few civilized explorers have dared to cross its frozen landscape more than once, but all who have survived even one trek manage to inspire any who listen with tales of frozen cities, ice giants, ferocious goblinkin, and winter beasts of the worst description. None know the truth of such tales, but more than a few adventurers have disappeared trying to prove the legends right or wrong.

Common belief is that long ago, bands of outlawed Vos roamed the Icemarch in search of food, shelter, and foolish prey. These frozen tribes became known as *zegraki*, or "man-hunters," because they would hunt each other when game grew scarce. Scouts and hunters who venture occasionally into the Icemarch swear the *zegraki* survive today but barely resemble even their most barbaric Vos forebears. From a distance, a pack of *zegraki* might seem to be a hunting or scouting party, but up close, these man-hunters reveal their more fearsome appearance.

## the modern icemarch

**S**ome say the avatar of Kriesha makes her mortal home in the Icemarch and keeps the land frozen for her own comfort. Natural or not, the winter that envelops the Icemarch is pervasive. Aside from the pine forest in the southern provinces, little vegetation grows in the land and only burrowing and hunting creatures can survive.

◆ *Provinces/Holdings:* According to trappers' tales and hunters' legends, one safe haven exists in the northeastern reaches of the Icemarch. They call it Timoshev, the famous "ice tower," and say it was carved from the Klessberg and its halls are heated by an unnatural magic that warms the air and inhabitants but does not melt its icy walls. If Timoshev truly exists, it must be ruled by a powerful wizard or priest steeped in the magic of the elemental water school. It is unknown what sort of subjects such a regent might have; there is no hint that the ice goblins of the frozen plains or the dreaded *zegraki* live in such magical splendor.

*Sites:* Aside from the legendary Tower of Ice, only a few notable sites exist in the Icemarch.

◆ *The Klessberg:* The largest glacial formation on Cerilia, the Klessberg covers northern Drachenward, the northern Icemarch, and the tip of the Battle Fens. It does not seal up the inlet leading to the Gnoll Fells; where the ice meets the ocean, the glacier has eroded into an arch that allows passage into this inlet by ships as large as a roundship. Despite mariners' legends, the glacier does not shift into the Leviathan's Reach during wintertime. The ice floes of the northern seas have little to do with this magnificent mountain of ice and snow.

The Klessberg provides a home for many arctic and subarctic creatures found nowhere else in Cerilia. Whole tribes of ice giants are said to carve their homes out of the base of the Klessberg, ranging southward during the winter months to plague the northern Vos, Brecht, and Rjurik settlements. They keep polar bears and ice trolls in their lairs and have been known to hunt as far south as Rovninodensk and Velenoye during particularly bitter winters.

◆ *The Ice Plains:* Not unlike the Frozen Steppes of the Battle Fens, the Ice Plains of the Icemarch harbor *remorhaz*, *skuhlzecki*, and other burrowing ice creatures, but the most dangerous inhabitants are the ice goblins and the once-human *zegraki*. Ice goblins resemble other goblins of Cerilia but are nearly as large as orogs and have gray-white, ashen skin. *Zegraki* appear to be barbaric, hairy Vos whose reversion to cannibalism makes them easily as fearsome as the ferocious ice goblins. Both races war with each other and themselves for the meager resources of the Icemarch. Neither can be bargained with and intimidation only goes so far. To the ice goblins and *zegraki* of the Icemarch, even the threat of death holds only so much terror.



◆ **Timoshev:** Those few who claim to have seen the Ice Tower and returned to tell their tales can agree only that it lies somewhere northeast of the Grovnekevic Forest, just out of sight of the Leviathan's Reach. None have gotten close enough for an accurate description, which makes many believe that the City of Ice is an enormous natural phenomenon. High, clear towers of ice jutting up from the Klessberg do not have to be man- or even magically-made structures, cynics say, and who would spend the energy necessary to construct such a city, anyway?

Despite (or perhaps because of) its detractors, the legend of Timoshev flourishes in lands like Drachenward, Hjorig, Velenoye, and Rovninodensk. Dreams of high, clear towers created and maintained by benevolent magics pervade the thoughts of would-be explorers. Fanciful stories of a race of beautiful men and women, living in warm comfort in the midst of their ever-winter land, are likely to be dispelled by an encounter with the known inhabitants of the Icemarch.

**Important NPCs:** Few Vos visit the Icemarch and none live there. To reach the Icemarch, one must either brave the Leviathan's Reach or somehow negotiate the Gnoll Fells, Tuar Annwn, or the Battle Fens. The Icemarch is a truly unexplored area where the only likely visitors are unlucky mariners who lost their vessels along the northern coast.

One such mariner, a Brecht guildier named Katherine Wuntrauch (*FBr*; G5; *An*, minor, 12; *LN*), sailed from Danigau a few years ago in an effort to explore and map the northern coast of Cerilia. According to Katherine, her boat was attacked by the Leviathan near the northeast coast of the Icemarch and only a few of the mariners survived the swim to shore. There, freezing on the slopes of the Klessberg, they used the last of their supplies to start a signal fire and warm themselves. No rescue came and within a few days they lost all hope. A few threw themselves into the freezing waters of the Reach rather than face a slower death from exposure.

Despite their ill fortune, Katherine and a few others resolved to penetrate inland across the glacier. They found the going easier than they expected and made good time. As best Katherine could figure their progress, they covered nearly eight miles each day, but to no avail—they found no safety, no wood to burn, and no animals to hunt. Eventually, exhausted, the surviving mariners laid themselves down to die.





But they did not die. Each drifted off to sleep, knowing he would never open his eyes again. To their surprise, each mariner later awoke—not on the freezing slopes of the Klessberg but in a room made of what Katherine called “warm ice.” Smooth and transparent as glass, the warm ice actually exuded heat and helped the mariners recover from the exposure they’d suffered.

In that place, the mariners also found food, warm clothes, and dry wood. As night eventually drew itself about them (the mariners could see the stars through the transparent roof of their room), they experimented by lighting a small fire. Warmth filled the room but the ice walls did not melt. The fire cheered the mariners but did not reveal an exit from the room—it appeared to have no doors or windows.

According to Katherine, all the mariners again fell asleep despite the careful organization of a watch order. Fighting off slumber, the Brecht mariner somehow managed to keep her eyes open for a few extra moments after her companions began snoring.

This proved a turning point in Katherine’s story. A moment later, as Katherine was about to give in to sleep, a crack appeared in the ice wall of the room. In stepped a tall, thin man dressed in white and gold with a silver circlet around his forehead. He seemed impossibly beautiful to the Brecht guilders and she barely noticed the two similarly-clothed servants who entered behind him. The servants placed food on a nearby ice table and drew cloaks up over some of the sleeping mariners while their lord (Katherine could only perceive him as a lord) looked on. Fighting back intense drowsiness, Katherine managed to sit up, surprising the lord, and began to speak. The next thing Katherine knew, she was sitting alone at the edge of a wood which turned out to be somewhere in northern Lutkhovsky.

After much hardship and the loss of several fingers and toes to frostbite, Katherine Wuntrauch made her way to one of Lutkhovsky’s lumber camps where she slowly regained her health. Now, she lives in Petropavinsk hoping to someday return to Brechtür—and perhaps to find someone willing to discover exactly where she and her missing crewmembers spent that strange night.

**DM’s Tips and Secrets:** Dangerous mainly because of its continual winter clime, the Ice-march holds only a few insurmountable dangers for the experienced adventurer. Mid- and high-level heroes are probably up to the challenge of the Ice-march. Perhaps the DM’s secrets that follow may entice adventurous heroes.

◆ *The Fabled Timoshev:* Even among a practical, barbaric people like the Vos, the lure of this undiscovered wonder has more than a little appeal. While no stories tell of vast treasures or magical artifacts hidden in the City of Ice, many Vos, Brecht, Rjurik, and even elf heroes long to discover Timoshev and return to tell their tale. Stories arise from the lumber camps of Lutkhovsky, the mines of Melyy, and the varsk ranges of Rovninodensk and beyond. The legend of the Ice Tower grows with every telling and many believe that nothing so strange and wonderful could exist without some precious secret to be won.

◆ *The Zegraki:* While the Vos remain the most primitive and barbaric of Cerilian humans, even they have drawn lines beyond which they refuse to tread. The zegraki, the man-hunters of the Ice-march, crossed that line long ago. While Belinik demands blood sacrifice and Kriesha’s Winter Witches claim lives as often as they do followers, no Vos can stand for cannibalism as a way of life.

Much like paladins of Anuire or Khinasi, some Vos have taken the extermination of the zegraki upon themselves as a sort of crusade. For the less well-meaning of these warriors, the man-hunters serve a role as the most dangerous game of all—primitive, desperate hunters with no fear or conscience. A Vos who can return home with a sack full of hairy, sloped-brow zegraki heads will win accolades with the warriors and priests of his tribe.







# the mistmoor

A dark, uneven land forever shrouded in an unnatural veil, the Mistmoor has been the site of more famous battles than any other realm in Vosgaard. Long before humans arrived in Cerilia, elves and humanoids struggled among the moors, falling to each others' weapons and fell magics. Brecht warriors, fleeing the famous Battle of Lake Ladan, fled and died in the Mistmoor. Even after their victory in Rzhlev, Vos armies returning through the moors found their progress impeded by unnameable beasts and horrors. *Refer to the map on page 49.*

According to legend, when the gods of the humans destroyed Azrai, the Lord of Shadow's essence lingered briefly in the Mistmoor, cursing it for all time. If any truth lies in this myth, it may explain the strangeness surrounding the land.

## the modern mistmoor

Despite occasional efforts by both Rzhlev and Rovninodensk, the borders of the Mistmoor have not changed in known history. Something magical and evil exists within the fog that creeps over the empty land but refuses to cross into any neighboring realm.

Low hills blanketed by dark, green grass cover the Mistmoor. Herd animals, including sheep and cattle, wander into the land occasionally and seem to survive well on the rich vegetation. But no Vos will knowingly eat a creature that has fed on Mistmoor grass or let the "tainted" animal live long enough to breed with outside herds. Animals that occasionally stray out of the Mistmoor into neighboring realms are killed and left to rot where they fall.

The same sometimes goes for people—and for good reason, according to Vos legend. From time to time, a caravan from Rzhlev, Hjorig, or Rovninodensk will cross the Mistmoor. Always heavily armed and moving as quickly as possible, these large parties seldom encounter anything of note. Invariably, they report seeing figures moving in the fog or along the shadowy hills, but seldom does anyone investigate these.

Those who do, it is said, seldom return—or seldom return *unchanged*.

The most recent story concerning the Mistmoor involves a caravan from Müden that attempted to cross Kal Kalathor but ran afoul of a goblin tribe unwilling to accept a reasonable bribe. Pursued by the goblin raiders, the Brechts were forced to flee into the Mistmoor. Night fell and the fog grew impenetrable. The 36 Brecht traders and guards made camp near a large mound and built a roaring fire. They posted a guard and settled down for the night.

Around midnight, the entire camp awoke to the sound of screaming. Certain the goblins were attacking, the Brechts grabbed their weapons and put their backs to the fire, ready to sell their lives as dearly as possible. But no goblins penetrated the ring of light.

All through the night, goblin screams issued from the mist. Every so often, a Brecht would see something move in the fog and fire an arrow. Most flew wide of their targets but one struck a shadow so large it seemed to loom over the small dome of light in the camp. The thing howled, and according to survivors, a creature of pure fog reached out and struck the men nearest the archer. More fog tendrils attacked all around the camp. Men and women hit by these "mist fists" lapsed into shivering comas or fled screaming into the night.

The attack ended when only five of the caravan remained conscious. Of the 12 comatose victims, only two survived the night; one died later in Rovnograd of what the healers said was extreme exposure. The other recovered and said that after being hit by the mist, she felt as if her blood was freezing inside her. Of the men and women who fled into the night, nothing was ever heard again.

◆ *Provinces/Holdings:* While no known regent exists within the Mistmoor, recent rumors insist that some intelligence controls the land. Many believe the fog creature that attacked the Brecht caravan is actually an ancient awnshegh that has only recently gained power over its fog- or mist-forged body. In Rovnograd, they call the thing the Mistman, and many believe it is the spirit of a Vos or Brecht scion who died after the Battle of Lake Ladan during the Brecht flight across the Mistmoor. Somehow, the bloodline and will of the scion combined with the magic of the Mistmoor's fog. If the stories are true, the Mistman may have only recently learned how to take semi-solid form and could be working on turning the Mistmoor into a realm of his own.



**Sites:** Since even the most daring adventurers of Vosgaard find little reason to explore the Mistmoor, few known, notable sites exist there.

- ◆ **The Charnel Pit:** Though Vos warriors sometimes honor their most prodigious foes in song or story (after killing them, of course), they have little regard for their enemies' mortal remains. When the Vos slay enemies, they regard the body only if it lies in the way of their next fight.

Thus, the mere existence of the Charnel Pit in the Mistmoor is marked with contradiction. According to the sketchy histories surrounding the Battle of Lake Ladan, a Vos tsareva managed to get ahead of the retreating Brecht armies and stake out a position near the border of the realm later known as Rzhlev. She ambushed the confused Brechts several times from the same position, ordering her soldiers to haul away the bodies and hide them in one of the long trenches that mark the Mistmoor's terrain. After slaughtering hundreds of Brechts and suffering minimal casualties to her own troops, the tsareva recalled her warriors and linked up with the main Vos force entering Rzhlev. As her troops withdrew from the ambush site, she ordered her soldiers to burn the bodies where they lay, firing upon them with her own precious stores of oil and firewood. No history records the reason behind this action.

The burning of the bodies, the legends say, could be seen all across the Mistmoor, even through the densest fog; for years afterward, the smell of burning flesh permeated the air. The Charnel Pit itself has never regrown the dark, green grass native to the land but remains black and barren as the day the fires subsided.

The Vos of Rzhlev and Rovninodensk believe phantoms of the Brecht warriors burned in the Charnel Pit still linger there, confused and disoriented from the ambush and unable to leave. The Brechts of Berhagen and Müden, however, say the Charnel Pit is the source of the Mistmoor's evil and that vengeful ghosts will one day rise out of the Pit and attack the forces of Rzhlev, finally returning the land to Brecht control.

**Important NPCs:** One of the survivors of the Brecht caravan that first encountered the Mistman still lives in Rovnograd. Unwilling to cross the Mistmoor again and unwilling to negotiate with the goblins of Kal Kalathor (who he blames for the deaths of his comrades), Bram Gregorovitch (*MV/Br; T6; Re, major, 27;*

*LN*) has found employment with the varsk breeding guild of Rovninodensk. Half-Vos (on his father's side), Bram favors his Brecht heritage in all ways but one: his desire for vengeance equals that of any Vos warrior.

Bram also lost a brother in the Mistmoor; his brother was the guard who first struck the shadow creature with an arrow and may have caused the destruction of the caravan. Bram, however, feels assured that the Mistman and its minions (he insists it had followers of some kind) would have attacked the caravan eventually. True or not, Bram has been saving his money in the hope of hiring a unit of Vos mercenaries to go into the Mistmoor and dispatch the creature.

Brown-haired and stout, Bram has a lithe, agile way of moving that suggests a mountain lion. He fights with knives and the Vos war spear and seldom wears armor. Some say the amulet around his neck—a silver hawk rampant—protects him from harm in battle. True or not, he came out of the Mistmoor unscathed once and hopes to do so again.

**DM's Tips and Secrets:** While few reasons exist for an adventuring party to travel into the Mistmoor, anyone may wish to pass through the supposedly haunted land. Only high-level adventurers should linger in the realm of fog, however, and only for good reason.

- ◆ **The Mistman:** The hero who proves the existence and nature of the so-called Mistman will win accolades in Rovninodensk and Rzhlev. A few nobles in Rovnograd (Bram Gregorovitch's opinions notwithstanding) do not believe the Mistman to be inherently evil and think he could prove a valuable ally if the goblins of Kal Kalathor or the elves of Tuar Annwn ever attack. They will pay well to have their theories tested.

Should a party venture into the Mistmoor, it may face wolves and wild hounds seemingly possessed by some higher intelligence. It may face zombies, skeletons, or phantoms left over from old battles or created by a new power. Or perhaps it will find only the occasional grazing sheep or cow and the empty touch of fog upon their faces.









## tuar annwn

**T**he heart of the Grovnekevic Forest lies somewhere in Tuar Annwn (refer to the map on page 49), and it is a dark heart indeed. More than any other elf realm, Tuar Annwn remains at war with the world. In other lands the elves may have forgotten or banned the *gheallie Sidhe*. Even in southern Vosgaard, in Cwmb Bheinn, the war between elves and humans seems to have ended. But not in Tuar Annwn. Never in Tuar Annwn.

According to elven lore, Tuar Annwn was the least- and last-born of the elf realms. Settled in the harsh northlands to watch over the humanoids of the region, Tuar Annwn was barely settled before the beginning of the elf-humanoid wars. It benefited only a little from the dwarf-elf peace accords. Even when other humanoids hid themselves from the powerful elf lords, the ice goblins, orogs, trolls, and others of northern Cerilia continued to fight against the smallest elven realm. Tuar Annwn never knew the long peace of other elf realms. Just when it felt it had driven back the humanoids once and for all, the humans arrived and the *gheallie Sidhe* later began.

A small realm far removed from Aduria, Tuar Annwn was influenced little by Azrai and the War of Shadow. It maintained contact with Cwmb Bheinn at that time, and many elves from Grovnekevic marched to Deismaar under the Aelvinking's banner. Few returned. Those who survived found the southern lands more hospitable and the remainder made their way home bitter at their realm's tremendous loss.

Wars between the Vos and the elves started almost immediately. The most powerful Vos realms hewed and burned their way north, fighting the elves of Tuar Annwn with ever-renewing vigor. The elves lost heart quickly—their most noted warriors had gone to Deismaar and not returned. Tuar Annwn gained its name then—it became “the land of silence” and has remained so ever since.

Elsewhere in this book, the story is told how the elves of Tuar Annwn, apparently defeated by Velenoye, faced extinction but somehow repelled and destroyed their enemies. Here, the great secret of Tuar Annwn is revealed.

Tuar Annwn, alone of Cerilian realms, exists in two worlds—both on Aebrynis and on the Shadow World. Somehow, in their desperation to survive, the wizards of Tuar Annwn called upon and harnessed the power of the Shadow World. During the battle with the Vos, however, they lost control of their spells and the heart of the Grovnekevic Forest now lies somewhere between two planes.

## modern tuar annwn

This situation has had a devastating effect on Tuar Annwn. While making the realm virtually impervious to attack (only characters with the ability to see into the Shadow World can even cross Tuar Annwn's borders without being turned back or becoming hopelessly lost), the shadowed nature of Tuar Annwn has closed the realm from the rest of Cerilia. Those who leave there may never be able to return home again.

The elves of Tuar Annwn have been changed by this experience as well. Still immortal (with regard to age and disease), they appear somewhat wasted and gaunt—almost as if their energies were being leached out of them. Possibly, the elves can feed vampirically on the energies of others, but that is merely an unsubstantiated legend known to a very few.

In truth, probably only a handful of people alive on Cerilia have any idea what has happened to Tuar Annwn. Even halflings who venture near there cannot fully perceive the shadowy effect on the land. Only those intimately familiar with the Shadow World can hope to understand the devastation.

◆ **Provinces/Holdings:** Since only a few elves of Tuar Annwn ever leave their shadowed realm and fewer still will talk about their homeland, little is known of the provinces and holdings of the elf realm. A court of wizards is believed to rule and maintain Tuar Annwn through a series of high-powered source holdings. No trade goes on within the realm, and it is thought that the depleted energies of the elves leaves little interest in law or government. Still, an elf king could exist within Tuar Annwn (and one probably does). He simply does not affect the lands outside his own.

**Sites:** Entering Tuar Annwn is the most dangerous thing a hero of Cerilia could conceivably do (with the exception of wakening the Gorgon from a good night's sleep). Still, a few hardy souls have entered Tuar Annwn and have brought back tales of their adventures.





- ◆ **The Annwnalach:** The "lake of silence" was once a clear, blue-green waterway used by the elves when traveling north to the sea. The elves once ruled the forests of the Gnoll Fells and the Icemarch in addition to their current lands and used the river from the Annwnalach as a major thoroughfare through that larger realm. Now, the lake and river are brackish and still, and as foreboding as the woods that grow against the shore.

Some say the waters of the Annwnalach have magical powers. Legends tell that drinking from or bathing in the Annwnalach will drain a person of strength and energy but an elf who does the same will find himself rejuvenated and fresh. The legends further tell that the elves of Tuar Annwn must bathe in and drink from the Annwnalach often or waste away to nothing, becoming unmoving husks barely alive but unable to die. The only basis for this legend is Vos superstition.

**DM's Tips and Secrets:** For centuries, Cerilian adventurers have avoided Tuar Annwn or paid the ultimate price. In recent years, the dark heart of Grovnekevic seems to be growing—tendrils of magic and shadow are reaching out beyond the elven realm. Before long, someone will need to stop them.

- ◆ **The Growing Shadow:** Centuries have passed since the elves of Tuar Annwn interacted with the outside world, but that watchful peace is at an end. Observers report that whatever shadow possessed Tuar Annwn in the past is growing beyond the realm's borders.

According to the humanoids of the Gnoll Fells, Tuar Annwn's wizards have begun corrupting the southeastern province in the Fells, and the humanoids have found no way to fight back. The orogs of the Sword Rust Tribes have had trouble with Firosk Slecktra (FE; W17; An, great, 35; CN) and many believe she comes from Tuar Annwn. Add to this the general corruption of the unsettled Battle Fens to the northeast, and the Land of the Dead becomes an expanding problem. Some say this is only the beginning and that the Shadow World may be growing into Cerilia in other places—but no one knows what to do about it.



**V**osgaard contains countless secrets frozen in the long winters of the land and the cold memories of its people. A few secrets are revealed here to aid the true Vos and those familiar with the wastes of Cerilia's northlands.

## weather in the wastes

**M**any of Cerilia's northern peoples struggle against harsh winters and unfriendly climes, but none can compare to the brutal weather of Vosgaard. Some say the land punishes the Vos for their ancestors' service to Azrai. Any adventurer who travels in Vosgaard without proper preparation can expect little mercy from the land or its people.

Depending on the season, Vosgaard's weather can be unpleasant, harsh, or extremely bitter—somehow, "pleasant" seldom works its way into the equation. If Azrai's curse does not lie on the land, maybe Kriesha's winter touch does.

The DM can choose the type of weather adventurers must endure while traveling in Vosgaard, but if a random weather event is called for, some guidelines follow.

First, determine the adventurers' location in Vosgaard based on two basic regions. Consider all sites north of Rovninodensk and the Orlenaskyy Mountains to be the northern marches (Vosgaard's weather turns particularly harsh here). Below that line, conditions are somewhat more temperate in the lowlands.

Second, determine the season. Vosgaard, like most of Cerilia, experiences four seasons: a brief (1–2 month) spring, a short (2–3 month) summer, a quickly passing (1–2 month) fall, and a long (6–8 month) winter.

These two factors determine the modifiers the DM should apply when rolling on Table 2: Random Weather Events.

## temperature

Temperatures in Vosgaard remain cool almost all year. Depending on location, the temperature can remain cold throughout the four seasons.

Table 1: Average Temperature

Region	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Northern Marches	0–30	20–60	–10–40	–60–0
Lowlands	20–50	40–80	30–60	–0–30

The DM can pick an exact temperature from the recommended range or may roll randomly. In rare cases, temperatures can occur above or below the averages within 10 to 20 degrees.

# part IV: new rules for a new land

## weather conditions

Table 2: Random Weather Events determines conditions that may impede or curtail adventures and seriously influence the activities of heroes in Vosgaard.

To use Table 2, roll 1d20 and add the appropriate modifiers for both season and region.

Table 2: Random Weather

1d20 Roll	Weather Result
1–5	Clear
6–8	Sleet/freezing rain
9–13	Light snow
14–17	Heavy snow
18–20	Blizzard

### Weather Modifiers

Situation	Effect
Northern Marches	+2
Lowlands	+0
Spring/Fall	+0
Summer	–3
Winter	+4



The DM may choose to apply any weather events he wishes based on location and season. Surprise weather events can catch even experienced characters off guard.

## effects of weather

When snow or freezing rain arrives, even the hardiest adventurers are affected. When forced outdoors in inclement weather, heroes must adjust abilities and statistics accordingly using the modifiers in Table 3: Weather Effects.

**Strength, Dexterity, Constitution:** These modifiers apply for as long as the weather event lasts. As soon as conditions change, the modifiers must change to reflect the new weather conditions.

**MV:** Cold conditions and blowing snow will slow characters' movement. When judging how far characters travel in a day or how much ground they can cover in combat, the DM must factor in the movement penalties for weather. These penalties also increase the movement costs of army units by a proportionate amount.

**THAC0:** Swinging a weapon accurately in bad conditions can be difficult at best; apply these penalties to characters' THAC0 ratings. For characters and creatures using missile weapons, first consider the sight penalties to determine if a shot is possible, then add the THAC0 penalty.

**Sight:** Apply this penalty to the distance a character can see, whether day or night.

**Spells?:** Casting certain spells may be difficult under adverse weather conditions. Spells that have long casting times, require sensitive material components (including liquids), or intricate somatic components may be difficult to cast. The ratings are:

**N=**No effect on spellcasting.

**M=**Moderate effect on spellcasting; the DM may require a Dexterity roll (modified by weather-related penalties) to determine success. If conditions indicate two M ratings (-30 temperatures plus heavy snow), treat this as an S rating.

**S=**Severe effect on spellcasting; a Dexterity roll modified by weather penalties is required to determine success. The DM may add other penalties as appropriate.





Table 3: Weather Effects

Precipitation	Str	Dex	Con	MV	THACO	Sight	Spells?
Blizzard	-2	-3	-1	-50%	-2	-90%	S
Hvy snow	-1	-2	-1	-20%	-1	-50%	M
Lt snow	-	-1	-	-	-1	-20%	N
Sleet	-1	-2	-	-20%	-2	-20%	N
Clear	no effect						
Temperature							
<0	-1	-1	-1	-	-	-	N
<-30	-1	-2	-2	-20%	-	-	M

Note: Modifiers for precipitation and temperature are cumulative.

## cold-weather gear

Characters adventuring in Vosgaard should be equipped with protective gear and warm clothing. The weather penalties above assume that characters are outfitted in average quality gear for the conditions. Creatures living in Vosgaard may or may not suffer penalties due to weather or temperature (determined by the DM). Goblins, orogs, and other humanoids, for example, will probably suffer modifiers similar to those detailed above. Animals and creatures native to arctic and subarctic lands (such as polar bears and Cerilian ice giants) will probably suffer no penalties.

When exposed to particularly harsh weather, characters who are not properly outfitted will suffer damage from sub-zero temperatures, wind, and precipitation. The amount of damage is determined by the DM. Maximum damage under the worst conditions (a sub-zero blizzard) should probably not exceed 1d6 points of damage every hour.

Finally, magical gear, spells, and unusual preparations may counteract all or part of many weather effects. For example, a party mounted on varskis can ignore the penalties to movement for most weather (short of a blizzard), but the varskis offer nothing to counteract the effect of weather on the party's ability scores.

The weather modifiers should be used by the DM to reinforce the dangers of venturing into the frozen lands of Vosgaard—they should not replace or prohibit good role-playing. These effects should apply only when they will enhance an adventure or situation.

## spell tattoos

Many of Cerilia's human and humanoid races employ tattooing as either decoration or cultural ritual. To the Vos, tattoos fill an integral part of their religion and culture.

Many Vos sport tattoos of one kind or another. To outsiders, these tattoos seem as crude and brutal as the Vos themselves. The Vos spell tattoo, however, is in a class by itself, and should be understood by those who wish to survive in Vosgaard.

When Vos men or women (usually warriors) distinguish themselves in battle or other activities that greatly benefit their tribe or church, they may be rewarded with a spell tattoo. Spell tattoos are different from the nonmagical tattoos many Vos wear to strike fear into their enemies or to denote status or rank within the tribe. The spell tattoo has a special magic that commands more respect than any mundane skin-dyeing.

Spell tattoos, when properly earned, can be imbued with magic usable by the bearer. Only priests can imbue a spell tattoo with power, and only priests can order the creation of the tattoos. Since Vos priests hoard their powers and jealously guard them from nonpriests (even among their own race), the awarding of a spell tattoo is rare and special.

A spell tattoo, when properly created and enchanted, allows a favored character (usually a Vos warrior) to carry the magic of a particular spell. When the character decides to use the spell, he may activate the tattooed spell and use it as if he were the priest who originally cast the spell. The tattoo has a chance of being ruined forever, but if it survives, it can be re-enchanted with the same spell it held before.

These powerful magics have been copied by a few non-Vos priests. At one time a tool used exclusively by priests of Belinik and Kriesha, spell tattoos have made their way across Cerilia slowly until virtually every human race has access to them. The Anuireans may or may not possess the secrets of spell tattoos; they consider tattooing barbaric and unnatural.

The mechanics of the spell tattoo are described below, along with the new 3rd-level priest spell *tattoo magic*.

**Note:** Due to an oversight in the *BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook*, the All sphere is not listed as a sphere of access for priests of Kriesha. Her priests are allowed minor access to the All sphere.



## tattoo magic

3rd level spell  
(Enchantment)

Sphere: All

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: Permanent until discharged

Casting Time: 4 hours

Area of Effect: One individual

Saving Throw: None

Use of this spell allows a priest to imbue a specially-created tattoo (known as a spell tattoo) with the energy of a single memorized spell. The bearer of the spell tattoo can then discharge the spell at any time as if he were the casting priest. The magic of the spell tattoo then fades and must be recharged (with the same spell) if it is to be used again.

Widely used only in Vosgaard, this spell has been successfully used, on rare occasions, by priests in Brechtür, Khinasi, and even Rjurik. Anuireans consider the practice both barbaric and sacrilegious.

When casting *tattoo magic* on a target for the first time, the priest must be present during the tattooing of the subject. Once the subject has a spell tattoo inscribed on his body, the priest needs only to pantomime the actions of a tattoist when casting *tattoo magic* to enchant the same inscription.

A spell tattoo can hold only one priest spell of 1st through 3rd level. The spell to be imbued must be cast by the priest near the end of the casting of the *tattoo magic* spell. Once a tattoo is imbued with a spell, that tattoo can hold only subsequent castings of that same spell. Most Vos priests can tell stories of horrible deaths suffered by individuals whose spell tattoos were attempted to be recharged with spells other than the original. A tattoo may be recharged by any priest capable of casting *tattoo magic* and its corresponding spell.

An individual may receive multiple spell tattoos. The number of tattoos may never exceed half the character's Constitution score (rounded down) or the casting will result in his death.

The material components include the priest's holy symbol, special tattoo ink blessed by a priest of the same faith and costing no less than 300 gp per vial, and any spell components necessary for the spell imbued into the tattoo. A vial of ink is sufficient to create one tattoo of about a 3-inch radius. The components are consumed in the casting according to the procedure for the imbued spell.

## role-playing and the spell tattoo

*Tattoo magic* is a powerful spell; if abused, it can unbalance a role-playing campaign. As a result, the following facts should be considered when a DM introduces spell tattoos into the game.

- ◆ Only heroes who distinguish themselves will ever be granted a spell tattoo. Even rarer is the granting of two or more tattoos. A tsar-evo favored by Belinik (of all the gods, his priests are most likely to bless characters with the power of spell tattoos) may gain three or four tattoos during his lifetime but use them only on rare occasions.
- ◆ Priests will never grant spell tattoos to followers of other faiths. Only in the most extreme cases might a priest bless an individual of another faith in such a way, and then only if the gods in question are amicable (Belinik and Kriesha, for example). In fact, most priests prefer to grant spell tattoos only to followers of the same temple network. Under no circumstance will a priest create a spell tattoo for a follower of a god in opposition to her own (Belinik vs. Haelyn, for example). Instead, that priest will probably seek to destroy a spell tattoo worn by a heretic and probably the bearer as well.
- ◆ Spell tattoos are not meant to be discreet or hidden. Often, they are large and obvious and a badge of honor. As a result, a character may be limited in the number of spell tattoos he may wear; too many tattoos (or wounds or ritual scarring) may result in marring or destroying existing tattoos.
- ◆ Most priests consider spell tattoos the property of the church. Although a priest gives the recipient of the tattoo leave to use the spell as he sees fit, a priest may intentionally mar a tattoo or refuse to reenchant it if she finds that a character has used a spell tattoo inappropriately.
- ◆ Cerilian deities grant spells to their priests solely at their discretion. They do not look kindly on priests who try to maximize their personal power at the expense of the faith. As a result, few priests have spell tattoos; even fewer feel secure enough to enchant their own. Legends of priests stripped of their priestly abilities or blasted into nothingness for misusing this spell are well known in Vosgaard.



## spell tattoos in other cultures

While not unknown in other lands of Cerilia, tattooing has never become a major artform outside of Vosgaard. The Khinasi consider tattoos interesting and artistic, but an inferior sort of magic. Most Brechts, living as close to the Vos as they do, relegate tattooing to the lower classes, primarily sailors and other "fringe elements" of their society.

The Rjurik regard tattooing with more mystique than these other cultures, but remain wary of tattoos as magical talismans. Still, if a priest of Erik decided that spell tattooing were a good idea, his followers would be accepting.

Only the Anuireans reject tattooing completely. They see it as barbaric, crude, and unnatural. To use tattooing in ritual magic seems to them to be blasphemy. No Anuirean would, under normal circumstances, willingly submit to the ritual magic of spell tattooing.

The list of deities that follows details the powers' attitudes toward spell tattoos. DMs must use their own judgment when introducing spell tattoos into a campaign.

Deity	Attitude Toward Spell Tattoos
Belinik	Encourages (highly)
Kriesha	Encourages (highly)
Laerme	Encourages (especially in Vosgaard and Khinasi)
Eloéle	Encourages (in Vosgaard and Brechtür)
Avani	Discourages
Sera	Discourages (except in Vosgaard)
Ruornil	Encourages (except in Anuire)
Nesirie	No position
Cuiraeén	Rejects (except in Khinasi)
Erik	Discourages in Rjurik, encourages in Vosgaard
Haelyn	Rejects

Priesthoods that encourage the use of spell tattoos favor their use as a reward for particularly fanatical and able followers. Those that discourage their use view spell tattooing as a useful tool under certain conditions, but do not regard the practice as a reward or status symbol among their followers. Those that take no position on spell tattoos may rarely grant their priests access to *tattoo magic*, but the practice is probably all but unknown among those followers. A priesthood that rejects spell tattoos actively opposes spell tattooing and often those who use it as a ritual.

These positions are open to interpretation by geography and culture. As stated, tattooing is a practiced art form in Khinasi; a priest of Halaia probably would not condemn or ex-

communicate someone wearing a tattoo. However, an individual priest would probably never get a tattoo or allow his followers to do so. He would oppose those who use *tattoo magic* as part of their worship.

## domain actions and the heartless wastes

Even the most civilized realms of Vosgaard cannot compare to the kingdoms and baronies in other lands. They are simply more barbaric and primitive. As a result, the DM may choose to curtail the effectiveness of certain domain actions at certain times. If anything, the DM should make Vos regents less dependent upon the domain action system and more eager to go adventuring with the idea of accomplishing the same effects through heroics and direct actions.

This does not mean a Vos regent must completely abandon the domain action system. But a player who desires the rulership of a domain or realm in Vosgaard must be prepared to step out of his "ivory tower" more often than other regents and to struggle against foes and the elements. Ordering one's domain from a protected and removed court simply isn't the Vos way.

If a PC regent refuses to use adventuring to accomplish domain actions on a regular basis, the DM should not hesitate to inflict penalties to reinforce the importance of adventuring. In Vosgaard's courts, a regent might suffer open rebellion, regular challenges to his right to rule, disloyalty among the peasantry, or even assassination attempts.

So why would a PC want rulership in Vosgaard if it is so difficult to manage? In this frigid, brutal land covered by snow and populated by monsters and a people only slightly less vicious than the orogs and goblins, Vosgaard has its attractions. When inspired, its warriors fight better and longer than virtually any other humans on Cerilia. Its people can endure more hardship than any other, and its land, savage as it is, contains more treasures and secrets than any other.



When a PC accepts the challenge of rulership in Vosgaard and risks his life and lordship on desperate quests to bring some semblance of civilization to Vosgaard, he should be rewarded. In another land, for example, setting up a trade route might simply mean spending a few RP, GB, and a domain action. In Vosgaard, the DM may "suggest" that the PC regent needs to travel overland, braving natural dangers and eliminating unnatural ones in order for the route to be established. The trade route in the softer southern land will yield a few GB (and perhaps RP) every domain turn just like the one in Vosgaard, but the trade route in the heartless wastes might have additional bonuses—extra GB, RP, or adventuring rewards.

Rulership in Vosgaard should be hands-on, dangerous, and personal. Sending a lieutenant to achieve even the simplest goal could be dangerous for a Vos monarch. Lieutenants who think they know how to rule often try to remove obstacles on their way to the throne. In Vosgaard, strength rules and weakness falls. Heroic regents always make certain they remain among the strong.

## new equipment

he BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook presented new equipment for Vos characters. This section reprints that equipment along with new additions.

## weapons and armor

**T**Warriors without peer, the preferred weapons and armor of the Vos may seem primitive to other races, but they have been used to great effect for centuries.

**Armor spikes:** When a Vos warrior purchases metal armor, he almost always includes armor spikes. These shoulder, elbow, helmet, and wrist-mounted spikes give a fearsome appearance and serve the warrior well in close combat. Whenever the wearer strikes an unarmed blow or grapples successfully with an opponent, the target of his attack must save vs. paralyzation or suffer damage from the spikes as well as the normal attack. In addition, evil Vos warriors sometimes poison their armor spikes with deadly venoms.

**Sabre:** Invented by the Khinasi, the Vos have adapted this long, curved sword.

The Vos version is heavier than the Khinasi cavalry sabre but it is no less effective.

**War spear:** A long, pine haft topped by a barbed metal head, the Vos war spear looks, to the untrained eye, like an oversized version of an Anuirean or Khinasi cavalry spear. When used by a trained Vos warrior, the war spear can act as a lance (causing double damage in the hands of a mounted, charging warrior). In addition, the barbs on the war spear's head can embed in an opponent. When the wielder of the weapon rolls its maximum possible damage (whether mounted or on foot), the barbs on the war spear embed in the victim. The war spear causes an additional 1d6+1 points of damage when removed without a successful first aid or healing check. In melee, the wielder may simply rip the war spear out of his victim on his next attack (no attack roll required). If the war spear was used in a mounted attack, the warrior is assumed to have dropped the weapon rather than hold it and risk being dragged off his mount.

**Dragonhide armor (AC 6, 20 lbs, 250 gp):** Often decorative and always fearsome, many people believe Vos dragonhide armor actually comes from slain dragons, killed by Vos heroes in the Orlenaskyy or Drachenaure Mountains. The Vos perpetuate this myth. In reality, Vos armorers make "dragonhide" from tanned and plated varsk skins and a few interlocking metal plates. Constructed to look like supple, scaled armor, this *faux* dragonhide does resemble the skin of a Cerilian dragon to some extent—but provides the wearer with less protection. Since varsk are trained as mounts and occasionally as pack animals, few suits of dragonhide armor exist in Vosgaard—thus the high cost. Still, many Vos warriors would kill for the right to wear dragonhide armor, *faux* or not.

**Varsk:** The strange, white-furred giant lizard of Vosgaard is one of the land's most prized animals. Captured or bred by the Vos warrior clans, these creatures remain fairly rare and only a few known "varsk farms" exist within the region, the most notable of which lies under the control of Rovninodensk.

The Vos consider the ill-tempered varsk well worth the trouble. Seemingly immune to natural cold and weather conditions, they make excellent and fearsome war mounts for Vos warriors; those few that cannot be trained as mounts end up as expensive pack animals. Fearing little, the varsk fights as his rider's ally in combat and often does the warrior's work for him.

A domesticated varsk costs about 250 gp in civilized Vos realms with a ready supply (such



Table 4: Statistics for Vos Weapons

Weapon	Cost (gp)	Wt	Sz	Type	Spd	Damage S-M/L
Armor spikes	4	2	S	P	1	1d3/1d2
Sabre	17	5	M	S	5	1d6+1/1d8+1
War Spear	5	5	M	P	6	1d8/1d8+1

as Rovninodensk or Velenoye). A war-trained varsk costs at least twice as much (in realms without a steady supply, the costs can reach astronomical figures). Both serve as excellent mounts, but when an experienced rider fights on the back of a war-trained varsk, both he and his mount can attack every round to good effect. An untrained but domesticated varsk will fight anything that attacks him or the rider on his back, but cannot be commanded or directed while in battle—it simply fights. A warrior mounted on such an animal will have trouble keeping his seat, let alone attacking.

As carnivores, varsk often panic other animals such as horses or yaks (also used as beasts of burden). A trained varsk will leave such animals alone (unless directed to attack), but an untrained lizard must be watched at all times. Though a varsk can survive for more than two weeks without much food, untrained varsk will eat whatever and whenever they can. The creatures do not adjust well to warmer climes and are virtually useless in temperatures over 60°.

Varsks use their webbed, clawed feet to move quickly over snow, leaving little imprint. They are unhindered by ice and are excellent climbers. Some varsk have even been trained to walk for extended periods on their hind legs, though they do not seem to be able to attack with their foreclaws.

Wild varsk roam the northlands of Vosgaard in packs and will attack anything. Even more ill-tempered than their domesticated cousins, wild varsk can be caught and trained only by extremely talented individuals. Domesticating a wild, adolescent varsk (older ones cannot be tamed) takes at least three to six months of rigorous training by a character with the animal handling nonweapon proficiency. Turning such an animal into a war mount is considered nearly impossible (virtually all varsk war mounts come from domesticated stock). In the wild, varsk live eight to eighteen years. Domesticated-from-birth animals have been known to lead active lives until reaching nearly thirty years. Few varsk, however, die of old age.

**Varsk:** AC 6; MV 15; HD 5+5; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (bite); SD suffers only half-damage from cold-based attacks; SZ L (15 feet long, nose to tail); Int animal (1) to semi (2-4); ML High (12); XP 270.

## varsk cavalry and varsk breeding

Perhaps the most noted and most effective Vos military unit, varsk cavalry are also the hardest to obtain. While a unit of varsk cavalry costs no more to muster or maintain than a unit of normal cavalry (as listed in the *BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook*), only realms with access to large numbers of trained varsk may muster these troops.

Currently, only two realms have varsk farms: Rovninodensk and Velenoye. Rovninodensk trades with any realm it does not see as a threat (DM's option), but Velenoye has been under a trade embargo for years.

If a regent wants to muster units of varsk riders, he must go through several steps. First, he must establish a source of varsk; second, he must plan to build his unit in accordance with breeding and training schedules. Finally, the regent must pay for the soldiers and equipment necessary to complete the unit.

Usually, Vos regents set up or ally with a trade guild in their own realms for the express purpose of acquiring varsk. The guild then establishes a trade route with a varsk breeding guild. This insures a steady, if slow, supply of domesticated varsk for the realm's military machine.

*A trade guild that specializes in breeding varsk can supply enough animals for one unit of varsk cavalry every year for every level of guild holding it has devoted to this effort in the target province.* The Markovian Saravok of Rovninodensk has a guild (2) in Ziass. It can supply a total of two units of varsk every year. This guild is remarkably lucrative; despite this slow trade, the trade route yields the typical number of Gold Bars for its regent.

Setting up a varsk breeding guild is difficult. First, varsk breeders can function only north of Lake Ladan (varsk do not breed well in warmer climes). Second, the guildmaster must begin with a large supply of varsk to form his herd; at least two hundred varsk are necessary for this purpose (about four units' worth). These varsk cannot be used for any purpose other than breeding or as pack animals (though existing varsk units



can be demilitarized for breeding purposes). Acquiring varsks must either be done through a trade route or by capturing the beasts in the wild (extremely difficult and only possible in the wild northern realms of Vosgaard).

Once a guild (0) has been established, the varsk breeder must wait an entire year before increasing the holding level to 1. Varsks breed fairly quickly in captivity and mature in less than a year, but they must be given time to become domesticated. From then on, a varsk breeding guild can be increased by one level every two domain turns. If it is ever reduced to 0 again, a full year must be spent recovering from what must have been a disaster.

In an emergency, varsk breeder holdings may be "liquidated" for military use. A regent may reduce his own guild holdings voluntarily to make his varsks available for active service immediately. By reducing a guild holding by one level, the regent may make enough varsks available to outfit two units of cavalry. However, he must wait an entire year before increasing the guild holding again. In addition, these "emergency units" function at a -1 penalty to their charge and defense ratings.

## primitive equipment

While the Vos have enough technology to manufacture weapons, armor, and other equipment of iron and steel (as have the other races

of Cerilia), they often must do without such items. When a Vos war clan ravages a province, burns a city, and kills everyone who resists, saving the smithy is a low priority. As a result, the Vos often must improvise for items other cultures consider standard.

Steel weapons and armor are often replaced by bone, flint, or hide equivalents. Bronze and other softer metals sometimes substituted for iron. The Vos, when they put their minds to it, are among the most proficient soft-metal workers in the world, with some of their gold and silversmiths rivalling the workmanship of the dwarves. But the Vos remain more concerned with survival than art or culture.

When the DM sees the need, he may declare that shortages of particular items, equipment, or materials have developed. This will drive up the cost of such remaining items and eventually deplete a region's supply. A city without smelters or a smithy won't produce much steel armor or weapons.

Using this tactic occasionally will teach the PCs to preserve their equipment and respond to crisis—especially if the DM introduces modifiers to actions related to the shortage. If, for example, a PC must use arrows with flint instead of steel tips, he'll find his damage reduced. When using a bone-headed spear, his weapon is less effective and may break more often. Most likely, the character will attempt to rectify the situation, spurring him on to adventures and heroic actions.

## vos nomenclature

This chart provides players and DMs with proper references to the people and features of Vosgaard. Residents of awn-shegh domains typically identify themselves by province, political association, or tribe name; therefore, not all are included.

Domain	Resident	Residents plural	Things of this origin
Battle Fens*			
Cwmb Bheinn	elf of Cwmb Bheinn	elves of Cwmb Bheinn	elven or of/from Cwmb Bheinn
Gnoll Fells	gnoll of Gnoll Fells	gnolls of Gnoll Fells	of/from Gnoll Fells
Hjorig	Hjoriger	Hjorigers	Hjorig
the Icemarch	Icemarcher	Icemarchers	Icemarcher
Kal Kalathor**	goblin of Kal Kalathor	goblins of Kal Kalathor	of/from Kal Kalathor
Kozlovnyy	Kozlovnian	Kozlovnians	Kozlovnian
Lutkhovsky	Lutkhovskian	Lutkhovskians	Lutkhovskian
Mely	Melian	Melians	Melian
Mistmoor†			
Molochev	Molochevian	Molochevians	Molochevian
Raven/Ust Atka	Ust Atkan	Ust Atkans	Ust Atkan
Rovninodensk	Rovninodensian	Rovninodenskians	Rovninodensian
Sword Rust Tribes**	Sword Rust orog	Sword Rust orogs	Sword Rust or orog
Tuar Annwn	elf of Tuar Annwn	elves of Tuar Annwn	elven or of/from Tuar Annwn
Velenoye	Velenoyan	Velenoyans	Velenoyan
Yeninsky	Yeninskian	Yeninskians	Yeninskian
Zoloskaya	Zoloskayan	Zoloskayans	Zoloskayan

\* Residents of the Battle Fens are identified by tribe.

† No residents are known to live in the Mistmoor.

\*\* Goblins and orogs also identify themselves by tribe.



# skuhlzecki (hot-headed ice borer)

<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Arctic to subarctic plains and hills
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Rare
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Pack
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Any
<b>DIET:</b>	Carnivore
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Animal (1)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	(O)
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Neutral
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	5-10
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	5 (10)
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	1, Br 9
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	2+2
<b>THACO:</b>	19
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	1
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	2d4 (bite)
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Superheated blood
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	Resistant to cold
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	Nil
<b>SIZE:</b>	S (2' long)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Average (8)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	175

A unique race of arctic worm, the skuhlzecki, or hot-headed ice borer, lives only on the cold plains and steppes of Vosgaard. Living within the thick permafrost of northern Cerilia, the ice borer spends its life hunting for food.

Reaching a maximum length of 2 feet at adulthood, the skuhlzecki remain among Vosgaard's most dangerous predators. The round, segmented worm has a bony, flat plate on the top of its head and a round, tooth-filled mouth. It has no visible eyes, ears, or nose. The creature's skin is as tough as cowhide but is entirely hairless.

Ice borers move by burrowing in snow or permafrost. They cannot burrow through solid ice. Because of a concentration of blood vessels beneath the bony plate in its head, a skuhlzecki can cause the plate to grow exceedingly hot (any creature touching this plate sustains 1d4 points of damage from a scalding burn). The heated plate turns the snow ahead of the ice borer to slush, allowing it to push or burrow through the snow. In the ice borer's frigid habitat, this narrow tunnel of slush freezes behind it almost immediately, closing off the worm's path.

**Combat:** Ice borers are believed to be blind but have a superior ability to sense vibrations. When a pack of ice borers senses a disturbance in the snow nearby, the group burrows to within about a foot of the surface to investigate. If they discover prey overhead, they swarm beneath the victim from below and move in like sharks. Working together, a number of the creatures can quickly melt the snow below a victim, creating a trap much like quicksand. The skuhlzecki then wait until the creature begins foundering in the mush before attacking (a saving throw vs. petrification is allowed to determine whether a character or creature can jump aside).

Ice borers attack with their powerful teeth and jaws. They bite victims from below, dragging the creatures further into the snow. Characters and creatures foundering in a skuhlzecki trap must make swimming nonweapon proficiency checks to move out of an ice borer's reach; these checks suffer a -2 penalty for each skuhlzecki involved in the attack.

As a skuhlzecki chews away at a victim, its incredible metabolism processes the meal quickly. Meat and fat are digested in a matter of minutes and moved directly into the bloodstream or stored in the form of fat reserves. As soon as the creature stops feeding, all digested food is converted to fat stores. The creatures are believed to have several stomachs which can hold food stores for later digestion. One of these appears to be a blood sac that swells after the creature feeds; whether the blood stored here is the creature's own or that of its victim remains the subject of argument.

Battling an ice borer pack is a difficult proposition. Because they attack from below, they cannot be detected by normal means. When they strike, they gain a +4 bonus to their chance to surprise a foe. Shields are virtually useless against an ice borer, resulting in an AC deduction when applicable. Slashing and most piercing melee weapons can be used to effectively fight skuhlzecki, but as long as the creatures remain hidden in the snow, characters must attack as if the ice borer were invisible (-4 to hit; magical methods of seeing invisible creatures will not help, though *x-ray vision* does). Bludgeoning weapons cause only half damage to skuhlzecki since snow and slush weaken most blows.





Should an ice borer tunnel to the surface, it will be much easier to fight. The creature is AC 10 while exposed on the ground and can be harmed by any weapon. If a blow kills an ice borer that has already fed (has caused more than 3 points of damage to any victims), its heated blood sac explodes in a 5-foot radius, burning all characters for 2d4 points of damage (a saving throw versus paralyzation is allowed to avoid damage). An ice borer lying on the surface of the snow will cease attacks and spend one round flipping over and the next using its hot head to dive back into the snow. If unable to do this for some reason, the creature crawls, inchworm-like, toward ice and snow at its above-ground movement rate.

**Habitat/Society:** Skuhlzecki live in small packs below the snow of Vosgaard's permafrost. They spend most of their time hunting. Attacks are more common in winter months and less frequent in warmer months; some

speculate that the skuhlzecki undergo a form of hibernation if the weather grows too warm.

Skuhlzecki lairs have never been discovered, but scholars assume that the creatures breed by laying eggs, much like other worms. Encounters with young ice-borers have never been reported; it is believed that because of their high metabolisms, the creatures grow to adulthood within a very short time (one month or less).

**Ecology:** Ice borers will attack anything that attracts their attention. They will eat any warm-blooded creature but seldom attack creatures smaller than a halfling or dwarf. They do not collect treasure, though their victims' goods and gear tend to fall into the snow along with the small bits of remains the creatures leave behind.

Skuhlzecki are unique to Vosgaard. No related creatures are known to exist on Cerilia.





# Tribes of the Heartless Waste

by Ed Stark

*The threat of death lurks everywhere*

**D**mitri lost sight of his quarry in the gathering darkness and stumbled back from the carnage. Minutes ago, he and his comrades had been trudging homeward across the snowfield when, without warning, their guide plunged beneath the snow in a spray of slush and blood. By the time the ice borer attacks subsided, only Dmitri was left, himself beaten and bloodied from trying to save his friends.

*The warrior broke into a run, aiming for a small stand of pines. Winter wolves howled a greeting to the night and sniffed the cold air. As Dmitri neared the trees, he could feel the snow beneath his feet softening with each step. . . .*

Vosgaard remains one of the truly unconquered, untamed regions of Cerilia. In the frozen landscape of the heartless north, only the hardest will survive—and few of those will thrive. Would-be rulers face the double threat of Vosgaard's climate and its denizens, each dangerous on its own and deadly in tandem, neither willing to be conquered.

Even those who venture into the wastes only for adventure must step lightly. The snow-choked lands keep an icy grip on their secrets and their victims. Some say that only Belinik and Kriesha can hear the pleas of their faithful above the winter winds, leaving the region truly godforsaken.

This expansion to the BIRTHRIGHT campaign setting includes:

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